

SAINT PAULS.

FEBRUARY, 1872.

SEPTIMIUS.

A ROMANCE OF IMMORTALITY.

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(Continued from p. 20.)

SEPTIMIUS remembered the young man's injunctions to bury him there, on the hill, without uncovering the body; and though it seemed a sin and shame to cover up that beautiful body with earth of the grave, and give it to the worm, yet he resolved to obey.

Be it confessed that, beautiful as the dead form looked, and guiltless as Septimius must be held in causing his death, still he felt as if he should be eased when he was under the ground. He hastened down to the house, and brought up a shovel and a pickaxe, and began his unwonted task of grave-digging, delving earnestly a deep pit—sometimes pausing in his toil, while the sweat-drops poured from him, to look at the beautiful clay that was to occupy it. Sometimes he paused, too, to listen to the shots that pealed in the far distance, towards the east, whither the battle had long since rolled out of reach, and almost out of hearing. It seemed to have gathered about itself the whole life of the land, attending it along its bloody course in a struggling throng of shouting, shooting men, so still and solitary was everything left behind it. It seemed the very midland solitude of the world where Septimius was delving at the grave. He and his dead were alone together, and he was going to put the body under the sod, and be quite alone.

The grave was now deep, and Septimius was stooping down into its depths among dirt and pebbles, levelling off the bottom, which he considered to be profound enough to hide the young man's mystery for ever, when a voice spoke above him; a solemn, quiet voice, which he knew well.

"Septimius! what are you doing here?"

He looked up and saw the minister.

"I have slain a man in fair fight," answered he, "and am about

to bury him as he requested. I am glad you are come. You, reverend sir, can fitly say a prayer at his obsequies. I am glad for my own sake; for it is very lonely and terrible to be here."

He climbed out of the grave, and, in reply to the minister's inquiries, communicated to him the events of the morning, and the youth's strange wish to be buried here, without having his remains subjected to the hands of those who would prepare it for the grave. The minister hesitated.

"At an ordinary time," said he, "such a singular request would of course have to be refused. Your own safety, the good and wise rules that make it necessary that all things relating to death and burial should be done publicly and in order, would forbid it."

"Yes," replied Septimius; "but, it may be, scores of men will fall to-day, and be flung into hasty graves without funeral rites; without its ever being known, perhaps, what mother has lost her son. I cannot but think that I ought to perform the dying request of the youth whom I have slain. He trusted in me not to uncover his body myself, nor to betray it to the hands of others."

"A singular request," said the good minister, gazing with deep interest at the beautiful dead face, and graceful, slender, manly figure. "What could have been its motive? But no matter. I think, Septimius, that you are bound to obey his request; indeed, having promised him, nothing short of an impossibility should prevent your keeping your faith. Let us lose no time, then."

With few but deeply solemn rites the young stranger was laid by the minister and the youth who slew him in his grave. A prayer was made, and then Septimius, gathering some branches and twigs, spread them over the face that was turned upward from the bottom of the pit, into which the sun gleamed downward, throwing its rays so as almost to touch it. The twigs partially hid it, but still its white shone through. Then the minister threw a handful of earth upon it, and, accustomed as he was to burials, tears fell from his eyes along with the mould.

"It is sad," said he, "this poor young man, coming from opulence, no doubt, a dear English home, to die here for no end, one of the first-fruits of a bloody war—so much privately sacrificed. But let him rest, Septimius. I am sorry that he fell by your hand, though it involves no shadow of a crime. But death is a thing too serious not to melt into the nature of a man like you."

"It does not weigh upon my conscience, I think," said Septimius; "though I cannot but feel sorrow, and wish my hand were as clean as yesterday. It is, indeed, a dreadful thing to take human life."

"It is a most serious thing," replied the minister; "but perhaps we are apt to over-estimate the importance of death at any particular moment. If the question were whether to die or to live for ever,

then, indeed, scarcely anything should justify the putting a fellow-creature to death. But since it only shortens his earthly life, and brings a little forward a change which, since God permits it, is, we may conclude, as fit to take place then as at any other time, it alters the case. I often think that there are many things that occur to us in our daily life, many unknown crises, that are more important to us than this mysterious circumstance of death, which we deem the most important of all. All we understand of it is, that it takes the dead person away from our knowledge of him, which, while we live with him, is so very scanty."

"You estimate at nothing, it seems, his earthly life, which might have been so happy."

"At next to nothing," said the minister; "since, as I have observed, it must, at any rate, have closed so soon."

Septimius thought of what the young man, in his last moments, had said of his prospect or opportunity of living a life of interminable length, and which prospect he had bequeathed to himself. But of this he did not speak to the minister, being, indeed, ashamed to have it supposed that he would put any serious weight on such a bequest, although it might be that the dark enterprise of his nature had secretly seized upon this idea, and, though yet sane enough to be influenced by a fear of ridicule, was busy incorporating it with his thoughts.

So Septimius smoothed down the young stranger's earthy bed, and returned to his home, where he hung up the sword over the mantel-piece in his study, and hung the gold watch, too, on a nail, the first time he had ever had possession of such a thing. Nor did he now feel altogether at ease in his mind about keeping it—the time-measurer of one whose mortal life he had cut off. A splendid watch it was, round as a turnip. There seems to be a natural right in one who has slain a man to step into his vacant place in all respects; and from the beginning of man's dealings with man this right has been practically recognised, whether among warriors or robbers, as paramount to every other. Yet Septimius could not feel easy in availing himself of this right. He therefore resolved to keep the watch, and even the sword and fusil—which were less questionable spoils of war—only till he should be able to restore them to some representative of the young officer. The contents of the purse, in accordance with the request of the dying youth, he would expend in relieving the necessities of those whom the war (now broken out, and of which no one could see the limit) might put in need of it. The miniature, with its broken and shattered face, that had so vainly interposed itself between its wearer and death, had been sent to its address.

But as to the mysterious document, the written paper, that he laid aside without unfolding it, but with a care that betokened more

interest in it than in either gold or weapon, or even in the golden representative of that earthly time on which he set so high a value. There was something tremulous in his touch of it ; it seemed as if he were afraid of it by the mode in which he hid it away, and secured himself from it, as it were.

This done, the air of the room, the low-ceilinged eastern room where he studied and thought, became too close for him, and he hastened out ; for he was full of the unshaped sense of all that had befallen, and the perception of the great public event of a broken-out war was intermixed with that of what he had done personally in the great struggle that was beginning. He longed, too, to know what was the news of the battle that had gone rolling onward along the hitherto peaceful country road, converting everywhere (this demon of war we mean), with one blast of its red sulphurous breath, the peaceful husbandman to a soldier thirsting for blood. He turned his steps, therefore, towards the village, thinking it probable that news must have arrived either of defeat or victory, from messengers or fliers, to cheer or sadden the old men, the women, and the children, who alone perhaps remained there.

But Septimius did not get to the village. As he passed along by the cottage that has been already described, Rose Garfield was standing at the door, peering anxiously forth to know what was the issue of the conflict—as it has been woman's fate to do from the beginning of the world, and is so still. Seeing Septimius, she forgot the restraint that she had hitherto kept herself under, and, flying at him like a bird, she cried out—

"Septimius, dear Septimius, where have you been ? What news do you bring ? You look as if you had seen some strange and dreadful thing."

"Ah, is it so ? Does my face tell such stories ?" exclaimed the young man. "I did not mean it should. Yes, Rose, I have seen and done such things as change a man in a moment."

"Then you have been in this terrible fight," said Rose.

"Yes, Rose, I have had my part in it," answered Septimius.

He was on the point of relieving his overburthened mind by telling her what had happened no further off than on the hill above them ; but, seeing her excitement, and recollecting her own momentary interview with the young officer, and the forced intimacy and link that had been established between them by the kiss, he feared to agitate her farther by telling her that that gay and beautiful young man had since been slain, and deposited in a bloody grave by his hands. And yet the recollection of that kiss caused a thrill of vengeful joy at the thought that the perpetrator had since expiated his offence with his life, and that it was himself that did it, so deeply was Septimius's Indian nature of revenge and blood incorporated with that of more peaceful forefathers, although Septimius

had grace enough to chide down that bloody spirit, feeling that it made him not a patriot but a murderer.

"Ah!" said Rose, shuddering, "it is awful when we must kill one another. And who knows where it will end?"

"With me it will end here, Rose," said Septimius. "It may be lawful for any man, even if he have devoted himself to God, or however peaceful his pursuits, to fight to the death when the enemy's step is on the soil of his home; but only for that perilous juncture, which passed, he should return to his own way of peace. I have done a terrible thing for once, dear Rose, one that might well trace a dark line through all my future life; but henceforth I cannot think it my duty to pursue any farther a work for which my studies and my nature unfit me."

"Oh no! oh no!" said Rose; "never! and you a minister, or soon to be one. There must be some peacemakers left in the world, or everything will turn to blood and confusion; for even women grow dreadfully fierce in these times. My old grandmother laments her bedriddenness, because, she says, she cannot go to cheer on the people against the enemy. But she remembers the old times of the Indian wars, when the women were as much in danger of death as the men, and so were almost as fierce as they, and killed men sometimes with their own hands. But women, nowadays, ought to be gentler; let the men be fierce, if they must—except you, and such as you, Septimius."

"Ah, dear Rose," said Septimius; "I have not the kind and sweet impulses that you speak of. I need something to soften and warm my cold, hard life; something to make me feel how dreadful this time of warfare is. I need you, dear Rose, who are all kindness of heart and mercy."

And here Septimius, hurried away by I know not what excitement of the time,—the disturbed state of the country, his own ebullition of passion, the deed he had done, the desire to press one human being close to his life, because he had shed the blood of another, his half-formed purposes, his shapeless impulses;—in short, being affected by the whole stir of his nature, he spoke to Rose of love, and with an energy that, indeed, there was no resisting when once it broke its bounds. And Rose, whose maiden thoughts, to say the truth, had long dwelt upon this young man,—admiring him for a certain dark beauty, knowing him familiarly from childhood, and yet having the sense, that is so bewitching, of remoteness, intermixed with intimacy, because he was so unlike herself; having a woman's respect for scholarship, her imagination the more impressed by all in him that she could not comprehend,—Rose yielded to his impetuous suit, and gave him the troth that he requested. And yet it was with a sort of reluctance and drawing back; her whole nature, her secretest heart, her deepest womanhood, perhaps, did not consent. There

was something in Septimius, in his wild, mixed nature, the monstrousness that had grown out of his hybrid race, the black infusions, too, which melancholic men had left there, the devilishness that had been symbolised in the popular regard about his family, that made her shiver, even while she came the closer to him for that very dread. And when he gave her the kiss of betrothment, her lips grew white. If it had not been in the day of turmoil, if he had asked her in any quiet time, when Rose's heart was in its natural mood, it may well be that, with tears and pity for him, and half pity for herself, Rose would have told Septimius that she did not think she could love him well enough to be his wife.

And how was it with Septimius? Well, there was a singular correspondence in his feelings to those of Rose Garfield. At first, carried away by a passion that seized him all unawares, and seemed to develop itself all in a moment, he felt, and so spoke to Rose, so pleaded his suit, as if his whole earthly happiness depended on her consent to be his bride. It seemed to him that her love would be the sunshine in the gloomy dungeon of his life. But when her bashful, downcast, tremulous consent was given, then immediately came a strange misgiving into his mind. He felt as if he had taken to himself something, good and beautiful doubtless in itself, but which might be the exchange for one more suited to him, that he must now give up. The intellect, which was the prominent point in Septimius, stirred and heaved, crying out vaguely that its own claims, perhaps, were ignored in this contract. Septimius had perhaps no right to love at all; if he did, it should have been a woman of another make, who could be his intellectual companion and helper. And then, perchance,—perchance,—there was destined for him some high, lonely path, in which, to make any progress, to come to any end, he must walk unburthened by the affections. Such thoughts as these depressed and chilled (as many men have found them, or similar ones, to do) the moment of success that should have been the most exulting in the world. And so, in the kiss which these two lovers had exchanged, there was after all something that repelled; and when they parted, they wondered at their strange states of mind, but would not acknowledge that they had done a thing that ought not to have been done. Nothing is surer, however, than that if we suffer ourselves to be drawn into too close proximity with people, if we over-estimate the degree of our proper tendency towards them, or theirs towards us, a reaction is sure to follow.

Septimius quitted Rose and resumed his walk towards the village. But now it was near sunset, and there began to be straggling passengers along the road, some of whom came slowly, as if they had received hurts; all seemed wearied. Among them one form appeared, which Rose soon found that she recognised. It was Robert Hag-

burn, with a shattered firelock in his hand, broken at the butt, and his left arm bound with a fragment of his shirt, and suspended in a handkerchief; and he walked wearily, but brightened up at sight of Rose, as if ashamed to let her see how exhausted and dispirited he was. Perhaps he expected a smile—at least a more earnest reception than he met; for Rose, with the restraint of what had recently passed drawing her back, merely went gravely a few steps to meet him, and said, "Robert, how tired and pale you look! Are you hurt?"

"It's of no consequence," replied Robert Hagburn; "a scratch on my left arm from an officer's sword, with whose head my gunstock made instant acquaintance. It is no matter, Rose; you do not care for it, nor do I either."

"How can you say so, Robert?" she replied. But without more greeting he passed her, and went into his own house, where, flinging himself into a chair, he remained in that despondency that men generally feel after a fight, even if a successful one.

Septimius, the next day, lost no time in writing a letter to the direction given him by the young officer, containing a brief account of the latter's death and burial, and a signification that he held in readiness to give up certain articles of property, at any future time, to his representatives, mentioning also the amount of money contained in the purse, and his intention, in compliance with the verbal will of the deceased, to expend it in alleviating the wants of prisoners. Having so done, he went up on the hill, to look at the grave, and satisfy himself that the scene there had not been a dream; a point which he was inclined to question, in spite of the tangible evidence of the sword and watch, which still hung over the mantel-piece. There was the little mound, however, looking so incontrovertibly a grave, that it seemed to him as if all the world must see it, and wonder at the fact of its being there, and spend their wits in conjecturing who slept within; and, indeed, it seemed to give the affair a questionable character, this secret burial, and he wondered and wondered why the young man had been so earnest about it. Well, there was the grave; and, moreover, on the leafy earth, where the dying youth had lain, there were traces of blood, which no rain had yet washed away. Septimius wondered at the easiness with which he acquiesced in this deed; in fact, he felt in a slight degree the effects of that taste of blood which makes the slaying of men, like any other abuse, sometimes become a passion. Perhaps it was his Indian trait stirring in him again; at any rate, it is not delightful to observe how readily man becomes a blood-shedding animal.

Looking down from the hill-top, he saw the little dwelling of Rose Garfield, and caught a glimpse of the girl herself, passing the windows

or the door, about her household duties, and listened to hear the singing which usually broke out of her. But Rose, for some reason or other, did not warble as usual this morning. She trod about silently, and somehow or other she was translated out of the ideality in which Septimius usually enveloped her, and looked little more than a New England girl,—very pretty indeed, but not enough so, perhaps, to engross a man's life and higher purposes into her own narrow circle. So, at least, Septimius thought. Looking a little farther—down into the green recess where stood Robert Hagburn's house—he saw that young man, looking very pale, with his arm in a sling, sitting listlessly on a half-chopped log of wood, which was not likely soon to be severed by Robert's axe. Like other lovers, Septimius had not failed to be aware that Robert Hagburn was sensible to Rose Garfield's attractions; and now, as he looked down on them both from his elevated position, he wondered if it would not have been better for Rose's happiness if her thoughts and virgin fancies had settled on that frank, cheerful, able, wholesome young man, instead of on himself, who met her on so few points; and in relation to whom, there was perhaps a plant that had its root in the grave that would entwine itself around his whole life, overshadowing it with dark rich foliage and fruit that he could only feast upon alone.

For the sombre imagination of Septimius, though he kept it as much as possible away from the subject, still kept hinting and whispering, still coming back to the point, still secretly suggesting that the event of yesterday was to have momentous consequences upon his fate.

He had not yet looked at the paper which the young man bequeathed to him—he had laid it away unopened: but not that he felt little interest in it; on the contrary, because he looked for some blaze of light which had been reserved for him alone. The young officer had been only the bearer of it to him, and he had come hither to die by his hand, because that was the readiest way by which he could deliver his message. How else, in the infinite chances of human affairs, could the document have found its way to its destined possessor? Thus mused Septimius, pacing to and fro on the level edge of his hill-top, apart from the world, looking down occasionally into it, and seeing its love and interest away from him; while Rose, it might be, looking upward, saw occasionally his passing figure, and trembled at the nearness and remoteness that existed between them; and Robert Hagburn looked too, and wondered what manner of man it was, who having won Rose Garfield (for his instinct told him this was so), could keep that distance between her and him, thinking remote thoughts.

Yes, there was Septimius, treading a path of his own on the hill-top; his feet began only that morning to wear it in his walking to and fro; sheltered from the lower world, except in occasional

glimpses, by the birches and locusts that threw up their foliage from the hill-side. But many a year thereafter he continued to tread that path, till it was worn deep with his footsteps and trodden down hard; and it was believed by some of his superstitious neighbours that the grass and little shrubs shrank away from his path, and made it wider on that account, because there was something in the broodings that urged him to and fro along the path alien to nature and its productions. There was another opinion, too, that an invisible fiend, one of his relatives by blood, walked side by side with him, and so made the pathway wider than his single footsteps could have made it. But all this was idle, and was, indeed, only the foolish babble that hovers like a mist about men who withdraw themselves from the throng, and involve themselves in unintelligible pursuits and interests of their own. For the present, the small world which alone knew of him considered Septimius as a studious young man who was fitting for the ministry, and was likely enough to do credit to the ministerial blood that he drew from his ancestors, in spite of the wild stream that the Indian priest had contributed; and perhaps none the worse, as a clergyman, for having an instinctive sense of the nature of the devil from his traditional claims to partake of his blood. But what strange interest there is in tracing out the first steps by which we enter on a career that influences our life! And this deep-worn pathway on the hill-top, passing and repassing by a grave, seemed to symbolise it in Septimius's case.

I suppose the morbidness of Septimius's disposition was excited by the circumstances which had put the paper into his possession. Had he received it by post it might not have impressed him; he might possibly have looked over it with ridicule, and tossed it aside. But he had taken it from a dying man, and he felt that his fate was in it; and truly it turned out to be so. He waited for a fit opportunity to open it and read it: he put it off as if he cared nothing about it; but perhaps it was because he cared so much. Whenever he had a happy time with Rose (and moody as Septimius was, such happy moments came) he felt that then was not the time to look into the paper—it was not to be read in a happy mood.

Once he asked Rose to walk with him on the hill-top.

"Why, what a path you have worn here, Septimius!" said the girl. "You walk miles and miles on this one spot, and get no farther on than when you started. That is strange walking!"

"I don't know, Rose; I sometimes think I get a little onward. But it is sweeter—yes, much sweeter, I find—to have you walking on this path here than to be treading it alone."

"I am glad of that," said Rose; "for, sometimes, when I look up here, and see you through the branches, with your head bent down and your hands clasped behind you, treading, treading, treading, always in one way, I wonder whether I am at all in your mind. I

don't think, Septimius," added she, looking up in his face and smiling, "that ever a girl had just such a young man for a lover."

"No young man ever had such a girl, I am sure," said Septimius; "so sweet, so good for him, so prolific of good influences!"

"Ah, it makes me think well of myself to bring such a smile into your face. But, Septimius, what is this little hillock here, so close to our path? Have you heaped it up here for a seat? Shall we sit down upon it for an instant, for it makes me more tired to walk backward and forward on one path than to go straight forward a much longer distance."

"Well, but we will not sit down on this hillock," said Septimius, drawing her away from it. "Farther out this way, if you please, Rose, where we shall have a better view over the wide plain, the valley and the long, tame ridge of hills on the other side, shutting it in like human life. It is a landscape that never tires, though it has nothing striking about it; and I am glad that there are no great hills to be thrusting themselves into my thoughts, and crowding out better things. It might be desirable, in some states of mind, to have a glimpse of water—to have the lake that once must have covered this green valley—because water reflects the sky, and so is like religion in life—the spiritual element."

"There is the brook running through it, though we do not see it," replied Rose; "a torpid little brook, to be sure; but, as you say, it has heaven in its bosom, like Walden Pond, or any wider one."

As they sat together on the hill-top they could look down into Robert Hagburn's enclosure, and they saw him, with his arm now relieved from the sling, walking about in a very erect manner, with a middle-aged man by his side, to whom he seemed to be talking and explaining some matter. Even at that distance Septimius could see that the rustic stoop and uncouthness had somehow fallen away from Robert, and that he seemed developed.

"What has come to Robert Hagburn?" said he. "He looks like another man than the lout I knew a few weeks ago."

"Nothing," said Rose Garfield, "except what comes to a good many young men nowadays. He has enlisted, and is going to the war. It is a pity for his mother."

"A great pity," said Septimius. "Mothers are greatly to be pitied all over the country just now, and there are some even more to be pitied than the mothers, though many of them do not know or suspect anything about their cause of grief at present."

"Of whom do you speak?" asked Rose.

"I mean those many good and sweet young girls," said Septimius, "who would have been happy wives to the thousands of young men who now, like Robert Hagburn, are going to the war. Those young men, many of them, at least, will sicken and die in camp, or be shot down, or struck through with bayonets on battle-fields, and turn to dust and

bones; while the girls that would have loved them, and made happy firesides for them, will pine and wither, and tread along many sour and discontented years, and at last go out of life without knowing what life is. So you see, Rose, every shot that takes effect kills two at least, or kills one, and worse than kills the other."

"No woman will live single on account of poor Robert Hagburn being shot," said Rose, with a change of tone; "for he would never be married were he to stay at home and plough the field."

"How can you tell that, Rose?" asked Septimius.

Rose did not tell how she came to know so much about Robert Hagburn's matrimonial purposes; but after this little talk it appeared as if something had risen up between them—a sort of mist, a medium in which their intimacy was not increased; for the flow and interchange of sentiment was baulked, and they took only one or two turns in silence along Septimius's trodden path. I don't know exactly what it was; but there are cases in which it is inscrutably revealed to persons that they have made a mistake in what is of the highest concern to them; and this truth often comes in the shape of a vague depression of the spirit, like a vapour settling down on a landscape; a misgiving, coming and going perhaps, a lack of perfect certainty. Whatever it was, Rose and Septimius had no more tender and playful words that day; and Rose soon went to look after her grandmother, and Septimius went and shut himself up in his study, after making an arrangement to meet Rose the next day.

Septimius shut himself up, and took forth the document which the young officer, with that singular smile on his dying face, had bequeathed to him as the reward of his death. It was in a covering of folded parchment, right through which, as aforesaid, was a bullet hole, and some stains of blood. Septimius unrolled the parchment cover, and found inside a manuscript, closely written in a crabbed hand; so crabbed, indeed, that Septimius could not at first read a word of it, nor even satisfy himself in what language it was written. There seemed to be Latin words, and some interspersed ones in Greek characters, and here and there he could doubtfully read an English sentence; but, on the whole, it was an unintelligible mass, conveying somehow an idea that it was the fruit of vast labour and erudition, emanating from a mind very full of books, and grinding and pressing down the great accumulation of grapes that it had gathered from so many vineyards, and squeezing out rich viscid juices—potent wine—with which the reader might get drunk. Some of it, moreover, seemed, for the further mystification of the officer, to be written in cipher; a needless precaution, it might seem, when the writer's natural chirography was so full of puzzle and bewilderment.

Septimius looked at this strange manuscript, and it shook in his hands as he held it before his eyes, so great was his excitement. Probably—doubtless—it was in a great measure owing to the way in which it came to him, with such circumstances of tragedy and mystery; as if—so secret and so important was it—it could not be within the knowledge of two persons at once, and therefore it was necessary that one should die in the act of transmitting it to the hand of another, the destined possessor, inheritor, profiter by it. By the bloody hand, as all the great possessions in this world have been gained and inherited, he had succeeded to the legacy, the richest that mortal man ever could receive. He pored over the inscrutable sentences, and wondered, when he should succeed in reading one, if it might summon up a subject-fiend, appearing with thunder and devilish demonstrations. And by what other strange chance had the document come into the hand of him who alone was fit to receive it? It seemed to Septimius, in his enthusiastic egotism, as if the whole chain of events had been arranged purposely for this end: a difference had come between two kindred peoples; a war had broken out; a young officer, with the traditions of an old family represented in his line, had marched, and had met with a peaceful student, who had been incited from high and noble motives to take his life; then came a strange, brief intimacy, in which his victim made the slayer his heir. All these chances, as they seemed—all these interferences of Providence, as they doubtless were, had been necessary in order to put this manuscript into the hands of Septimius, who now pored over it, and could not with certainty read one word!

But this did not trouble him, except for the momentary delay. Because he felt well assured that the strong, concentrated study that he would bring to it would remove all difficulties, as the rays of a lens melt stones—as the telescope pierces through densest light of stars, and resolves them into their individual brilliancies. He could afford to spend years upon it, if it were necessary; but earnestness and application should do quickly the work of years.

Amid these musings, he was interrupted by his aunt Keziah, who, though generally observant enough of her nephew's studies, and feeling a sanctity in them, both because of his intending to be a minister, and because she had a great reverence for learning, even if heathenish, this good old lady summoned Septimius somewhat peremptorily to chop wood for her domestic purposes. How strange it is—the way in which we are summoned from all high purposes by these little homely necessities; all symbolising the great fact that the earthly part of us, with its demands, takes up the greater portion of all our available force. So Septimius, grumbling and groaning, went to the wood-shed and exercised himself for an hour as the old lady requested; and it was only by instinct that he worked, hardly conscious what he was doing. The whole of passing life seemed

impertinent; or if, for an instant, it seemed otherwise, then his lonely speculations and plans seemed to become impalpable, and to have only the consistency of vapour, which his utmost concentration succeeded no farther than to make into the likeness of absurd faces, mopping, mowing, and laughing at him.

But that sentence of mystic meaning shone out before him like a transparency, illuminated in the darkness of his mind; he determined to take it for his motto until he should be victorious in his quest. When he took his candle, to retire apparently to bed, he again drew forth the manuscript, and sitting down by the dim light, tried vainly to read it; but he could not as yet settle himself to concentrated and regular effort; he kept turning the leaves of the manuscript in the hope that some other illuminated sentence might gleam out upon him, as the first had done, and shed a light on the context around it; and that then another would be discovered, with similar effect, until the whole document would thus be illuminated with separate stars of light, converging and concentrating in one radiance that should make the whole visible. But such was his bad fortune, not another word of the manuscript was he able to read that whole evening; and, moreover, while he had still an inch of candle left, Aunt Keziah, in her nightcap, as witch-like a figure as ever went to a wizard-meeting in the forest with Septimius's ancestor, appeared at the door of the room, aroused from her bed, and, shaking her finger at him—

"Septimius," said she, "you keep me awake, and you will ruin your eyes, and turn your head, if you study till midnight in this manner. You'll never live to be a minister, if this is the way you go on."

"Well, well, Aunt Keziah," said Septimius, covering his manuscript with a book, "I am just going to bed now."

"Good-night, then," said the old woman; "and God bless your labours."

Strangely enough a glance at the manuscript, as he hid it from the old woman, had seemed to Septimius to reveal another sentence, of which he had imperfectly caught the purport; and when she had gone, he in vain sought the place, and vainly, too, endeavoured to recall the meaning of what he had read. Doubtless his fancy exaggerated the importance of the sentence, and he felt as if it might have vanished from the book for ever. In fact, the unfortunate young man, excited and tossed to and fro by a variety of unusual impulses, was got into a bad way, and was likely enough to go mad, unless the balancing portion of his mind proved to be of greater volume and effect than as yet appeared to be the case.

The next morning he was up, bright and early, poring over the manuscript with the sharpened wits of the new day, peering into its night, into its old, blurred, forgotten dream; and, indeed, he had been dreaming about it, and was fully possessed with the idea that,

in his dream, he had taken up the inscrutable document, and read it off as glibly as he would the page of a modern drama, in a continual rapture with the deep truth that it made clear to his comprehension, and the lucid way in which it evolved the mode in which man might be restored to his originally undying state. So strong was the impression, that when he unfolded the manuscript, it was with almost the belief that the crabbed old handwriting would be plain to him. Such did not prove to be the case, however; so far from it, that poor Septimius in vain turned over the yellow pages in quest of the one sentence which he had been able, or fancied he had been able, to read yesterday. The illumination that had brought it out was now faded, and all was a blur, an inscrutableness, a scrawl of unintelligible characters alike. So much did this affect him, that he had almost a mind to tear it into a thousand fragments, and scatter it out of the window to the west wind, that was then blowing past the house; and if, in that summer season, there had been a fire on the hearth, it is possible that easy realization of a destructive impulse might have incited him to fling the accursed scrawl into the hottest of the flames, and thus return it to the devil, who he suspected was the original author of it. Had he done so, what strange and gloomy passages would I have been spared the pain of relating! How different would have been the life of Septimius—a thoughtful preacher of God's word, taking severe but conscientious views of man's state and relations; a heavy-browed walker and worker on earth; and, finally, a slumberer in an honoured grave, with an epitaph bearing testimony to his great usefulness in his generation!

But, in the meantime, here was the troublesome day passing over him, and pestering, bewildering, and tripping him up with its mere sublunary troubles, as the days will all of us the moment we try to do anything that we flatter ourselves is of a little more importance than others are doing. Aunt Keziah tormented him a great while about the rich field, just across the road, in front of the house, which Septimius had neglected the cultivation of, unwilling to spare the time to plough, to plant, to hoe it himself, but hired a lazy lout of the village, when he might just as well have employed and paid wages to the scarecrow which Aunt Keziah dressed out in ancient habiliments, and set up in the midst of the corn. Then came an old codger from the village, talking to Septimius about the war—a theme of which he was weary; telling the rumour of skirmishes that the next day would prove to be false—of battles that were immediately to take place—of encounters with the enemy, in which one side showed the valour of twentyfold heroes, but had to retreat; babbling about shells and mortars, battalions, manœuvres, angles, fascines, and other items of military art; for war had filled the whole brain of the people, and enveloped the whole thought of man in a mist of gunpowder.

In this way, sitting on his doorstep, or in the very study, haunted by such speculations, this wretched old man would waste the better part of a summer afternoon, while Septimius listened, returning abstracted monosyllables, answering amiss, and wishing his persecutor jammed into one of the cannons he talked about, and fired off, to end his interminable babble in one roar—of great officers coming from France and other countries—of overwhelming forces from England, to put an end to the war at once—of the unlikelihood that it ever should be ended—of its hopelessness—of its certainty of a good and speedy end.

Then came limping along the lane a disabled soldier, begging his way home from the field, which, a little while ago, he had sought in the full vigour of rustic health, which he was never to know again; with whom Septimius had to talk, and relieve his wants as far as he could (though not from the poor young officer's deposit of English gold), and send him on his way.

Then came the minister, to talk with his former pupil, about whom he had latterly had much meditation, not understanding what mood had taken possession of him; for the minister was a man of insight, and from conversations with Septimius, as searching as he knew how to make them, he had begun to doubt whether he were sufficiently sound in faith to adopt the clerical persuasion. Not that he supposed him to be anything like a confirmed unbeliever; but he thought it probable that these doubts, these strange, dark, disheartening suggestions of the devil, that so surely infect certain temperaments and measures of intellect, were tormenting poor Septimius, and pulling him back from the path in which he was capable of doing so much good. So he came this afternoon to talk seriously with him, and to advise him, if the case were as he supposed, to get for a time out of the track of the thought in which he had so long been engaged, to enter into active life, and by-and-by, when the morbid influences should have been overcome by a change of mental and moral regimen, he might return, fresh and healthy, to his original design.

"What can I do?" asked Septimius gloomily. "What business take up, when the whole land lies waste and idle, except for this war?"

"There is the very business, then," said the minister. "Do you think God's work is not to be done in the field as well as in the pulpit? You are strong, Septimius, of a bold character, and have a mien and bearing that gives you a natural command among men. Go to the wars, and do a valiant part for your country, and come back to your peaceful mission when the enemy has vanished. Or you might go as chaplain to a regiment, and use either hand in battle—pray for success before a battle, help to win it with sword or gun, and give thanks to God, kneeling on the bloody field, at its close. You have already stretched one foe on your native soil."

Septimius could not but smile within himself at this warlike and bloody counsel; and joining it with some similar exhortations from Aunt Keziah, he was inclined to think that women and clergymen are, in matters of war, the most uncompromising and bloodthirsty of the community. However, he replied coolly that his moral impulses and his feelings of duty did not exactly impel him in this direction, and that he was of opinion that war was a business in which a man could not engage, with safety to his conscience, unless his conscience actually drove him into it, and that this made all the difference between heroic battle and murderous strife. The good minister had nothing very effectual to answer to this, and took his leave, with a still stronger opinion than before, that there was something amiss in his pupil's mind.

By this time, this thwarting day had gone on through its course of little and great impediments to his pursuit—the discouragements of trifling and earthly business, of purely impertinent interruption, of severe and disheartening opposition from the powerful counteraction of different kinds of mind—until the hour had come at which he had arranged to meet Rose Garfield. I am afraid the poor thwarted youth did not go to his love-tryst in any very amiable mood; but rather, perhaps, reflecting how all things earthly and immortal, and love among the rest, whichever category of earth or heaven it may belong to, set themselves against man's progress in any pursuit that he seeks to devote himself to. It is one struggle, the moment he undertakes such a thing, of everything else in the world to impede him.

However, as it turned out, it was a pleasant and happy interview that he had with Rose that afternoon. The girl herself was in a happy tuneful mood, and met him with such simplicity, threw such a light of sweetness over his soul, that Septimius almost forgot all the wild cares of the day, and walked by her side with a quiet fullness of pleasure that was new to him. She reconciled him, in some secret way, to life as it was, to imperfection, to decay; without any help from her intellect, but through the influence of her character, she seemed, not to solve, but to smooth away problems that troubled him; merely by being, by womanhood, by simplicity, she interpreted God's ways to him; she softened the stoniness that was gathering about his heart. And so they had a delightful time of talking, and laughing, and smelling to flowers; and when they were parting, Septimius said to her,—

"Rose, you have convinced me that this is a most happy world, and that Life has its two children, Birth and Death, and is bound to prize them equally; and that God is very kind to His earthly children; and that all will go well."

"And have I convinced you of all this?" replied Rose, with a pretty laughter. "It is all true, no doubt, but I should not have

known how to argue for it. But you are very sweet, and have not frightened me to-day."

"Do I ever frighten you then, Rose?" asked Septimius, bending his black brow upon her with a look of surprise and displeasure.

"Yes, sometimes," said Rose, facing him with courage, and smiling upon the cloud so as to drive it away; "when you frown upon me like that, I am a little afraid you will beat me, all in good time."

"Now," said Septimius, laughing again, "you shall have your choice, to be beaten on the spot, or suffer another kind of punishment—which?"

So saying, he snatched her to him, and strove to kiss her, while Rose, laughing and struggling, cried out—"The beating! the beating!" But Septimius relented not, though it was only Rose's cheek that he succeeded in touching. In truth, except for that first one, at the moment of their plighted troths, I doubt whether Septimius ever touched those soft, sweet lips, where the smiles dwelt and the little pouts. He now returned to his study, and questioned with himself whether he should touch that weary, ugly, yellow, blurred, unintelligible, bewitched, mysterious, bullet-penetrated, blood-stained manuscript again. There was an undefinable reluctance to do so, and at the same time an enticement (irresistible, as it proved) drawing him towards it. He yielded, and taking it from his desk, in which the precious, fatal treasure was locked up, he plunged into it again, and, this time, with a certain degree of success. He found the line which had before gleamed out, and vanished again, and which now started out in strong relief; even as when sometimes we see a certain arrangement of stars in the heavens, and again lose it, by not seeing its individual stars in the same relation as before; even so, looking at the manuscript in a different way, Septimius saw this fragment of a sentence, and saw, moreover, what was necessary to give it a certain meaning. "Set the root in a grave, and wait for what shall blossom. It will be very rich, and full of juice." This was the purport, he now felt sure, of the sentence he had lighted upon; and he took it to refer to the mode of producing something that was essential to the thing to be concocted. It might have only a moral bearing; or, as is generally the case, the moral and physical truth went hand in hand.

(To be continued.)

THE "GOOD GENIE" OF FICTION.

(THOUGHTS WHILE READING FORSTER'S "LIFE OF CHARLES DICKENS.")

THERE WAS ONCE a good Genie, with a bright eye and a magic hand, who, being born out of his due time and place, and falling not upon fairy ways, but into the very heart of this great city of London wherein we write, walked on the solid earth in the nineteenth century in a most spirit-like and delightful dream. He was such a quaint fellow, with so delicious a twist in his vision, that where you and I (and the wise critics) see straight as an arrow, he saw everything queer and crooked; but this, you must know, was a terrible defect in the good Genie, a tremendous weakness, for how *can* you expect a person to behold things as they are whose eyes are so wrong in his head that they won't even make out a straight mathematical line? To the good Genie's gaze, everything in this rush of life grew queer and confused. The streets were droll, and the twisted windows winked at each other. The river had a voice, crying, "Come down! come down!" and the Wind and Rain became absolute human entities, with ways of conducting themselves strange beyond expression. Where you see a clock, *he* saw a face and heard the beating of a heart. The very pump at Aldgate became humanized, and held out its handle like a hand for the good Genie to shake. Amphion was nothing to him. To make the gouty oaks dance hornpipes, and the whole forest go country-dancing, was indeed something, but how much greater was the feat of animating stone houses, great dirty rivers, toppling chimneys, staring shop-windows, and the laundress's wheezy mangle! Pronounce as we may on the wisdom of the Genie's conduct, no one doubts that the world was different before he came; the same world, doubtless, but a duller, more expressionless world; and perhaps, on the whole, the people in it—especially the poor, struggling people—wanted one great happiness which a wise and tender Providence meant to send. The Genie came and looked, and after looking for a long time, began to speak and print; and so magical was his voice, that a crowd gathered round him, and listened breathlessly to every word; and so potent was the charm, that gradually all the crowd began to see everything as the charmer did (in other words, as the wise critics say, to *squint* in the same manner), and to smile in the same odd, delighted, bewildered fashion. Never did pale faces brighten more wonderfully! never did eyes that had seen straight so very long,

and so very, very sadly, brighten up so amazingly at discovering that, absolutely, everything was crooked! It was a quaint world, after all, quaint in both laughter and tears, odd over the cradle, comic over the grave, rainbowed by laughter and sorrow in one glorious Iris, melting into a thousand beautiful hues. "My name," said the good Genie, "is Charles Dickens, and I have come to make you all—but especially the poor and lowly—brighter and happier." Then, smiling merrily, he waved his hands, and one by one, along the twisted streets, among the grinning windows and the human pumps, quaint figures began to walk, while a low voice told stories of Human Fairyland, with its ghosts, its ogres, its elves, its good and bad spirits, its fun and frolic, oft culminating in veritable harlequinade, and its dim, dew-like glimmerings of pathos. There was no need any longer for grown-up children to sigh and wish for the dear old stories of the nursery. What was Puss in Boots to Mr. Pickwick in his gaiters? What was Tom Thumb, with all its oddities, to poor Tom Pinch playing on his organ all alone up in the loft? A new and sweeter Cinderella arose in Little Nell; a brighter and dearer little Jack Horner eating his Christmas pie was found when Oliver Twist appeared and "asked for more." It was certainly enchanting the earth with a vengeance, when all life became thus marvellously transformed. In the first place, the world was divided, just as old Fairyland had been divided, into good and bad fairies, into beautiful Elves and awful Ogres, and everybody was either very loving or very spiteful. There were no composite creatures, such as many of our human tale-tellers like to describe. Then there was generally a sort of Good Little Boy who played the part of hero, and who ultimately got married to a Good Little Girl, who played the part of heroine.

In the course of their wanderings through human fairyland, the hero and heroine met all sorts of strange characters—queer-looking Fairies, like the Brothers Cheeryble, or Mr. Toots, or David Copperfield's aunt, or Mr. Dick, or the convict Magwitch; out-and-out Ogres, ready to devour the innocent, and without a grain of goodness in them, like Mr. Quilp, Jonas Chuzzlewit, Fagin the Jew, Carker with his white teeth, Rogue Riderhood, and Lawyer Tulkinghorn; comical Will-o'-the-wisps, or moral Impostors, flabby of limb and sleek of visage, called by such names as Stiggins, Chadband, Snawley, Pecksniff, Bounderby, and Uriah Heep. Strange people, forsooth, in a strange country. Wise critics said that the country was not the world at all, but simply Topsy-turvyland; and indeed there might have seemed some little doubt about the matter, if every now and again, in the world we are speaking of, there had not appeared a group of poor people with such real laughter and tears that their humanity was indisputable. Scarcely had we lost sight for a moment of the Demon Quilp, when whom should we meet but Codlin and Short sitting mending their wooden figures in the church-

yard? and not many miles off was Mrs. Jarley, every scrap on whose bones was real human flesh; the Peggotty group living in their upturned boat on the sea-shore, while little Em'ly watches the incoming tide erasing her tiny footprint on the sand; the Dorrit family, surrounding the sadly comic figure of the Father of the Marshalsea; good Mrs. Richards and her husband the Stoker, struggling through thorny paths of adversity with never a grumble; Trotty Veck sniffing the delicious fumes of the tripe a good fairy is bringing to him; and Tiny Tim waving his spoon, and crying, "God bless us all!" in the midst of the smiling Cratchit family on Christmas Day. This was more puzzling still—to find "real life" and "fairy life" blended together most fantastically. It was like that delightful tale of George MacDonald's, where you never can tell truth from fancy, and where you see the country in fairyland is just like the real country, with cottages [and cooking going on inside], and roads, and flower-gardens, and finger-posts, yet everything haunted most mysteriously by supernatural creatures. But let the country described by the good Genie be ever so like the earth, and the poor folk moving in it ever so like life, there was never any end to the enchantment. On the slightest provocation trees and shrubs would talk and dance, intoxicated public-houses hiccup, clocks talk in measured tones, tombstones chatter their teeth, lamp-posts reel idiotically, all inanimate nature assume animate qualities. The better the real people were, and the poorer, the more they were haunted by delightful Fays. The Cricket talked on the hearth, and the Kettle sang in human words. The plates on the dresser grinned and gleamed, when the Pudding rolled out of its smoking cloth, saying perspiringly, "Here we are again!" Talk about Furniture and Food being soulless things! The good Genie knew better. Whenever he went into a mean and nig-gardly house, he saw the poor devils of chairs and tables attenuated and wretched, the lean timepiece with its heart thumping through its wretched ribs, the fireplace shivering with a red nose, and the chimney-glass grim and gaunt. Whenever he entered the house of a good fat person, with a loving, generous heart, he saw the difference—jolly fat chairs, if only of common wood, tables as warm as a toast, and mirrors that gave him a wink of good-humoured greeting. It was all enchantment, due perhaps in a great measure to the strange twist in the vision with which the good Genie was born.

Thus far, perhaps, in a sort of semi-transparent allegory, have we indicated the truth as regards the wonderful genius who has so lately left us. Mighty as was the charm of Dickens, there have been from the beginning a certain select few who have never felt it. Again and again has the great Genie been approached by some dapper dilettante of the superfine sort, and been informed that his manner was wrong altogether, not being by any means the manner of Aristophanes, or Swift, or Sterne, or Fielding, or Smollett, or Scott. This man has

called him, with some contempt, a "caricaturist." That man has described his method of portrayal as "sentimental." MacStingo prefers the humour of Galt. The gelid, heart-searching critic prefers Miss Austen. Even young ladies have been known to take refuge in Thackeray. All this time, perhaps, the real truth as regards Charles Dickens has been missed or perverted. He was not a satirist, in the sense that Aristophanes was a satirist. He was not a comic analyst, like Sterne; nor an intellectual force, like Swift; nor a sharp, police-magistrate sort of humorist, like Fielding; nor a practical-joke-playing tomboy, like Smollett. He was none of these things. Quite as little was he a dashing romancist or fanciful historian, like Walter Scott. Scott found the Past ready made to his hand, fascinating and fair. Dickens simply enchanted the Present. He was the creator of Human Fairyland. He was a magician, to be bound by none of your commonplace laws and regular notions: as well try to put Incubus in a glass case, and make Robin Goodfellow the monkey of a street hurdy-gurdy. He came to put Jane Austen and M. Balzac to rout, and to turn London into Queer Country. Yes, my Gigadibs, he was hotheaded as an Elf, untrustworthy as a Pixy, maudlin at times as a lovesick Giant, and he squinted like Puck himself. He was, in fact, anything but the sort of story-teller the dull old world had been accustomed to. He was most impractical. His pictures distorted life and libelled society. He grimaced and he gambolled. He bewitched the solid pudding of practicality, and made it dance to aerial music, just as if Tom Thumb were inside of it. It is, therefore, as you say, highly inexpedient that his works should be much studied by young people, who must be duly crammed with tremendous first principles; and for a literary Rhadamanthus of two-hundred-horse power, he is absurd reading. Nor should we care to recommend his narratives to the Gradgrinds or the Dombeyes of this generation. His stories are so child-like, so absurd, so unwise, so mad. But *such* stories! When shall we hear the like again? Wiser and greater tale-tellers may come, if to be hard and cold is to be wise and great; but who will lull us once more into such infancy of delight, and make us glorious children once again? The good Genie has gone, and already the wise critics—who speak with such authority, and are so tremendously above being pleasing themselves—are shaking their heads over his grave.

But the amount of the world's interest in Charles Dickens is not to be measured by any quantity of head-shakings on the part of the unsympathetic; and now that the magic has departed every English home misses the magician. In spite of the small scandal which is spilt over every tea-table, in spite of the shrill yelps of those canine persons who (finding the literary monuments too much like marble to suit their teeth) snap savagely at the great writer's personality, there wells from English life, at the present moment, a

light spring of ever-increasing gratitude, having its source very deep indeed. The small critic may still hold that Dickens was a sort of Baevius or Maevius of his day, to be forgotten with the ephemera of his generation; but, then, is it not notorious that the person in question (God help his poor addled Toots-like brains!) thought Thackeray "no gentleman," and finds in the greatest genius of America only the ravings of a madman? With the wrong and right about a great author petulant scribbling has nothing whatever to do. The world decides for itself. And the world decided long ago that Dickens was beyond all parallel the greatest imaginative creator of this generation, and that his poetry, the best of it, although written in unrhymed speech, is worth more, and will possibly last longer, than all the Verse-poetry of this age, splendid as some of that poetry has been. None but a spooney or a pedant doubts the power. One question remains, how did that power arise? by what means did it grow? Just as all England had decided that the question was unanswerable up rises the best of all biographers with his most charming of books, and solves in a series of absorbing chapters the great part of the mystery. Only the first instalment of Mr. Forster's biography has yet appeared, and already the subject eclipses even the Tichborne case as a topic of after-dinner chat. It is not without a shock that we are admitted behind the curtain of the good Genie's private life. All is so different from what we had anticipated. The tree which bore fruit as golden as that of the Hesperides was rooted in a wretched soil, and watered with the bitterest possible tears of self-compassion.

We see it all now in one illuminating flash. We see the mightiness of the genius and its limitations. We see why, less than almost any great author, Dickens changed with advancing culture; how, more than ninety-nine out of a hundred men, he acquired the habit of instant observation, false or true; why he imparted to things animate and inanimate the qualities of each other; wherefore all life seemed so odd to him; why, in a word, instead of soaring at once into the empyrean of the sweet English "classics" (so faultless that you can't pick a speck in them), he remained on the solid pavement, and told elfin and goblin stories of common life. It may seem putting the case too strongly, but Charles Dickens, having crushed into his childish experience a whole world of sorrow and humorous insight, so loaded his soul that he never grew any older. He was a great, grown-up, dreamy, impulsive child, just as much a child as little Paul Dombea or little David Copperfield. He saw all from a child's point of view—strange, odd, queer, puzzling. He confused men and things, animated scenery and furniture with human souls, wondered at the stars and the sea, hated facts, loved good eating and sweetmeats, fun, and frolic,—all in the childish fashion. Child-like he commiserated himself, with sharp, agonising introspection. Child-like he rushed out into

the world with his griefs and grievances, concealing nothing, wildly craving for sympathy. Child-like he had fits of cold reserve, stubborn and crueler than the reserve of any perfectly cultured man. And just as much as little Paul Dombey was out of place at Dr. Blimber's, where they tried to cram him with knowledge, and ever pronounced him old-fashioned, was Charles Dickens out of place in the cold, worldly circle of literature, in the bald bare academy of English culture, where his queer stories and quaint ways were simply astonishing, until even that hard circle began to love the quaint, questioning, querulous, mysterious guest, who would *not* become a pupil. Like little Paul, he was "old-fashioned." "What," he might have asked himself with little Paul, "what could that 'old-fashion' be, that seemed to make the people sorry? What could it be?"

Never, perhaps, has a fragment of biography wakened more interest and amazement than the first chapters of Mr. Forster's biography. Who that had read the marvellous pictures of child-life in "*David Copperfield*," and had been startled by their vital intensity, were prepared to hear that they were merely the transcript of real thoughts, feelings, and sufferings; were the literal transcript of the writer's own actual experience—nay, were even a portion of an autobiography written by the author himself in the first flush of his manhood? The pinching want, the sense of desolation, the sharp, agonising pride, were all real, just as real as the sharp, child-like insight into life and character, and the wonderful knowledge of the by-ways of life. His first experience was at Chatham, where his father held a small appointment under Government, and here he not only contracted that love for the neighbourhood which abided with him through life, but amassed the material for many of his finest sketches of persons and localities—notably for that extraordinary account of a journey down the river given in "*Great Expectations*." His own account of his life at Chatham, embodied in the fragment of biography before alluded to, is very interesting; and in his autobiographical novel we have a list of the very books he loved—"Tom Jones," "*Tales of the Genii*" (but the tale of the most wonderful Genie of all remained to be told!), "*Arabian Nights*," "*Roderick Random*," "*Humphrey Clinker*," "*Don Quixote*," "*Robinson Crusoe*," and "*Gil Blas*." Before he was nine years old, however, Dickens was removed to that mighty City over which he was afterwards to shed the glamour of veritable enchantment, and which, from having been the wonder and delight of his early boyhood, was to arise into the huge temple of his art. The elder Dickens, having procured a situation in Somerset-house, took his family to Bayham Street, Camden Town, and shortly afterwards little Charles was forwarded inside the stage-coach, "like game, carriage paid." His recollection of the journey was very vivid. "There was no other inside passenger," he relates, "and I consumed my sandwiches in solitude and dreariness, and it rained hard all the way, and I thought

life sloppier than I had expected." The following passage from Mr. Forster's biography is pregnant with interest, and tells a whole tale of sorrowful change:—

"The earliest impressions received and retained by him in London, were of his father's money involvements; and now first he heard mentioned 'the deed,' representing that crisis of his father's affairs in fact which is ascribed in fiction to Mr. Micawber's. He knew it in later days to have been a composition with creditors, though at this earlier date he was conscious of having confounded it with parchments of a much more demoniacal description. One result from the awful document soon showed itself in enforced retrenchment. The family had to take up its abode in a house in Bayham Street, Camden Town.

"Bayham Street was about the poorest part of the London suburbs then, and the house was a mean small tenement, with a wretched little back-garden abutting on a squalid court. Here was no place for new acquaintances to him: no boys were near with whom he might hope to become in any way familiar. A washerwoman lived next door, and a Bow-street officer lived over the way. Many many times has he spoken to me of this, and how he seemed at once to fall into a solitary condition apart from all other boys of his own age, and to sink into a neglected state at home which had always been quite unaccountable to him. 'As I thought,' he said on one occasion very bitterly, 'in the little back-garret in Bayham Street, of all I had lost in losing Chatham, what would I have given, if I had had anything to give, to have been sent back to any other school, to have been taught something anywhere!' He was at another school already, not knowing it. The self-education forced upon him was teaching him, all unconsciously as yet, what, for the future that awaited him, it most behoved him to know.

"That he took, from the very beginning of this Bayham Street life, his first impression of that struggling poverty which is nowhere more vividly shown than in commoner streets of the ordinary London suburb, and which enriched his earliest writings with a freshness of original humour and quite unstudied pathos that gave them much of their sudden popularity, there cannot be a doubt. 'I certainly understood it,' he has often said to me, 'quite as well then as I do now.' But he was not conscious yet that he did so understand it, or of the influence it was exerting on his life even then. It seems almost too much to assert of a child, say at nine or ten years old, that his observation of everything was as close and good, or that he had as much intuitive understanding of the character and weaknesses of the grown-up people around him, as when the same keen and wonderful faculty had made him famous among men. But my experience of him led me to put implicit faith in the assertion he unvaryingly himself made, that he had never seen any cause to correct or change what in his boyhood was his own secret impression of anybody whom he had had, as a grown man, the opportunity of testing in later years.

"How it came that, being what he was, he should now have fallen into the misery and neglect of the time about to be described, was a subject on which thoughts were frequently interchanged between us; and on one occasion he gave me a sketch of the character of his father which, as I can here repeat it in the exact words employed by him, will be the best preface I can make to what I feel that I have no alternative but to tell. 'I know my father to be as kindhearted and generous a man as ever lived in the world. Everything that I can remember of his conduct to his wife, or children, or friends, in sickness or affliction, is beyond all praise. By me, as a sick child, he has watched night and day, unweariedly and patiently, many nights and days. He never undertook any business charge, or trust, that he did not zealously, conscientiously, punctually, honourably discharge. His industry has always been

untiring. He was proud of me, in his way, and had a great admiration of the comic singing. But, in the case of his temper and the strictness of his means, he appeared to have utterly lost at this time the idea of educating me at all, and to have utterly put from him the notion that I had any claim upon him in that regard, whatever. So I degenerated into cleaning his boots of a morning, and my own; and making myself useful in the work of the little house; and looking after my younger brothers and sisters (we were now six in all); and going on such poor errands as arose out of our poor way of living."

In this and other portions of the biography, we are thus directly informed that Mr. Dickens, senior, with his constant pecuniary embarrassments, his easy good nature, his utter impracticality, sat full length for the immortal portrait of Mr. Micawber; and this fact has already been the signal for much after-dinner comment and for numberless bitter remarks on the part of the unsympathetic. It so happens that Dickens, in his biographical fragment as in his great novel, dwells with all the intensity of an incurably wounded nature on the early privations and trials which (as has been truly observed) made him the great power he was. This, it is suggested, was, if not positive folly, rank ingratitude; his self-commiseration was contemptible, his after-recrimination atrocious; and it is to be regretted that he was not at once more manly and more gentle. Thus far a small section of the public. Read, now, Dickens's account of his life at the blacking warehouse, where he was sent at the request of a relation:—

"It is wonderful to me how I could have been so easily cast away at such an age. It is wonderful to me that, even after my descent into the poor little drudge I had been since we came to London, no one had compassion enough on me—a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally—to suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common school. Our friends, I take it, were tired out. No one made any sign. My father and mother were quite satisfied. They could hardly have been more so if I had been twenty years of age, distinguished at a grammar school and going to Cambridge.

"The blacking warehouse was the last house on the left-hand side of the way, at old Hungerford-stairs. It was a crazy, tumble-down old house, abutting, of course, on the river, and literally overrun with rats. Its wainscoted rooms and its rotten floors and staircase, and the old grey rats swarming down in the cellars, and the sound of their squeaking and scuffling coming up the stairs at all times, and the dirt and decay of the place, rise up visibly before me, as if I were there again. The counting-house was on the first floor, looking over the coal-barges and the river. There was a recess in it, in which I was to sit and work. My work was to cover the pots of paste-blackening, first with a piece of oil-paper, and then with a piece of blue paper; to tie them round with a string; and then to clip the paper close and neat, all round, until it looked as smart as a pot of ointment from an apothecary's shop. When a certain number of grosses of pots had attained this pitch of perfection I was to paste on each a printed label; and then go on again with more pots. Two or three other boys were kept at similar duty down-stairs on similar wages. One of them came up, in a ragged apron and a paper cap, on the first Monday morning, to show me the trick of using the string and tying the knot. His name was Bob Fagin; and I took the liberty of using his name, long afterwards, in *Oliver Twist*. . . . I

know I do not exaggerate, unconsciously and unintentionally, the scantiness of my resources and the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling or so were given me by any one, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that I worked, from morning to night, with common men and boys, a shabby child. I know that I tried, but ineffectually, not to anticipate my money, and to make it last the week through; by putting it away in a drawer I had in the counting-house, wrapped into six little parcels, each parcel containing the same amount, and labelled with a different day. I know that I have lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond."

At last, this hard life came to an end; how, is explained in this bitter sequel:—

"At last, one day, my father, and the relative so often mentioned, quarrelled; quarrelled by letter, for I took the letter from my father to him which caused the explosion, but quarrelled very fiercely. It was about me. It may have had some backward reference, in part, for anything I know, to my employment at the window. All I am certain of is, that, soon after I had given him the letter, my cousin (he was a sort of cousin, by marriage) told me he was very much insulted about me; and that it was impossible to keep me after that. I cried very much, partly because it was so sudden, and partly because, in his anger, he was violent about my father, though gentle to me. Thomas, the old soldier, comforted me, and said he was sure it was for the best. With a relief so strange that it was like oppression, I went home.

"My mother set herself to accommodate the quarrel, and did so next day. She brought home a request for me to return next morning, and a high character of me which I am very sure I deserved. My father said, I should go back no more, and should go to school. *I do not write resentfully or angrily: for I know how all these things have worked together to make me what I am;* but I never afterwards forgot, I never shall forget, I never can forget, that my mother was warm for my being sent back.

"From that hour until this at which I write, no word of that part of my childhood which I have now gladly brought to a close, has passed my lips to any human being. I have no idea how long it lasted; whether for a year, or much more, or less. From that hour, until this, my father and my mother have been stricken dumb upon it. I have never heard the least allusion to it, however far off and remote, from either of them. I have never, until I now impart it to this paper, in any burst of confidence with any one, my own wife not excepted, raised the curtain I then dropped, thank God!"

The reader has now before him the whole story, the whole explanation of why, over Charles Dickens, "ere he is scarce cold,"

"Begins the scandal and the cry!"

The case is very simple. Charles Dickens, having been greatly unfortunate in his youth, dwelt on the circumstances with an intensity "almost vindictive"—in other words, with the frightfully realistic power which especially distinguished the man. Weighing all the circumstances, probing the very core of the truth, we see nothing in this to account for the prevalent misconception. Let us bear in mind, in the first place, the keenness of the author's memory, and the stiletto-like touches of the author's style, both liable to be misunder-

stood by men with dimmer memories and flabbier styles. Let us remember, next, that Dickens was concocting no mere fiction, but attempting to tell things exactly as they had happened,—to narrate (in his own words) “the whole truth, so help me God!” Lastly, let us not forget, that the words we have read were no formal public charge, but the rapid instantaneous flashes of a private self-examination, never published until totally disguised and modified. We have more faith in the English public, which has persistently adhered to the great master in spite of the carpings and doubtings of Blimberish persons, than to imagine it will be misled in reading this matter, any more than Mr. Forster has been misled in printing it; and we unhesitatingly assert that, in the autobiographical fragment, there is not one sentence inconsistent with a noble soul, a beneficent mind, and a loving heart. The worst passage is that referring to his mother’s desire to send him back to the blacking warehouse. We agree with Dickens that such a desire was cruel almost to brutality (Dickens never *says* so, though he seems to have felt as much), but we affirm, nevertheless, that the language he uses is perfectly tender and lawful. “I never shall *forget*, I never can *forget*,”—that is all. The impression survived, but had he not tried to obliterate it a million times? and why?—because, with that reverent yearning nature, he would fain have made himself believe his mother had been completely noble and true to him, because he was too sensitive to do without motherly love and tenderness, because he could not bear to think the one great consecration of childhood had been missing. Such a feeling, we believe, so far from being inconsistent with love, is part of love’s very nature. Had he not been filial to the intensest possible degree, he would never have felt an unmotherly touch so sorely. He sits in no judgment, he utters no blame, but to himself, in the recesses of his soul, he cries that he would part with half his fame to feel that that one unkindness had been wanting. “The pity of it, the pity of it, Iago!” And *we*, who owe him a new world of love and beauty, we who are to him as blades of common grass to the rose, are we to sit in judgment on our good Genie, because he has bared his heart to us, a little too much, perhaps, in the all-telling candour of a child? God forbid! Shall we cast a stone, too, because (as we are told) he, in one of his leading characters, “caricatured his own father?” O dutiful sons that we are, shall we spit upon the monster’s grave? No. Rather let us, like wise men, read the words already quoted, wherein the great author pictures his father’s character in all the hues of perfect tenderness and truth. Rather let us open “David Copperfield,” and study the character of Micawber again,—to find the queer sad human truth embodied in such a picture as only love could draw, as only a heart overflowing with tenderness could conceive and feel. MICAWBER! There is light in every lineament, sweetness in every tone, of the delicious creature.

"The very incarnation of selfishness," it is retorted; "dishonourable, mean, absurd, gross, contemptible." But to this there is no reply; for Micawber, with all his faults, which are of the very nature of the man, is to us, as to him who limned him for our affection, almost as dear a figure as Don Quixote, or Parson Adams, or Strap, or Uncle Toby.

But this appealing against harsh judgment is thankless work. Far better pass on to those portions of the book which show how Dickens, when a neglected boy, began accumulating the materials for his great works—wandering about Seven Dials, aghast at that theatre of human tragedy of which every threshold was the proscenium; haunting the wharfs and bridges, till the river became a dark and awful friend; visiting the gaffs and shows in the Blackfriars Road, till every feature of low mumming life grew familiar to him; visiting his father in that Marshalsea of which he was to leave so vivid a memorial; watching the cupola of St. Paul's looming through the smoke of Camden Town; dreaming, planning, picturing, until this vast web of London grew, as we have said, enchanted, and life became a magic tale. So intense were the sensations of those days, so vivid were the impressions, that they remained with the author for ever, fascinating him, as it were, into one child-like way of looking at the world. Indeed, the sense of oddity deepened as he grew older in years—till it became almost ghastly, brooding specially on ghastly things, in his last unfinished fragment.*

One never forgets how Aladdin, when he got possession of the ring, and, rubbing the tears out of his eyes, accidentally rubbed the ring too, discovered all in a moment his power over spirits and things unseen. Much in the same way did Dickens discover his gift. It was an accidental rub, as it were, when he was crying sadly, that brought the brilliant help. But in his case, unlike that of Aladdin, the power grew with using. The first few figures summoned up in the "Sketches" were clever enough, but vague and absurdly thin, mere shadows of what was coming. But suddenly, one morning, descended like Mercury the angel Pickwick beaming through his spectacles; and the man-child revelled in laughter, utterly abandoning himself to the maddest mood. He was not as yet quite spell-bound by his own magic, and was merely full of the fun. The tricky Spirit of Metaphor, which he compelled to such untiring service afterwards, scarcely got beyond such an image as this, in the vulgarising style of "Tom Jones":—"That punctual servant-of-all-work, the sun, had just risen and begun to strike a light." But the book was full of quiddity, rich in secret unction. It was in a sadder mood, with the recollections of his hard boyish sufferings still too fresh upon him, that he wrote "Oliver Twist." This book, with all its faults, shows what its writer might have been, if he had not chosen rather to be a great magician. Putting aside

* See "The Mystery of Edwin Drood."

altogether the artificial love story with which it is interblended, and which is the merest padding, there is scarcely a character in this fiction which is not rigidly drawn from the life, and that without the faintest attempt to secure quiddity at the expense of verisimilitude. The character of Nancy, the figures of Fagin and his pupils, the conduct of Sykes after the murder, are all studies in the hardest realistic manner, with not one flash of glamour. Even the Dodger is more life-like than delightful. There are touches in it of marvellous cunning, strokes of superb insight, bits of description unmatched out of the writer's own works; but the lyric identity (if we may apply the phrase to one who, although he wrote in prose, was specifically a poet) had yet to be achieved. The charm was not all spoken. The child-like mood was not yet quite fixed. Not at the "Oliver Twist" stage of genius could he have written thus of a foggy November day: "Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snow-flakes—gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun;" or thus about shop-windows on the same occasion: "Shops lighted two hours before their time—as the gas seems to know, for it has a haggard and unwilling look;" or thus of a sleeping country town, where "nothing seemed to be going on but the clocks, and they had such drowsy faces, such heavy lazy hands, and such cracked voices, that they surely must have been too slow." Still less could he have pictured the wonderful figure of little Nell surrounded by oddities animate and inanimate, and moving through them to a sweet sleep and an early grave. Still less could he have written such an entire description as that of the Court of Chancery in "Bleak House," where the fog of the weather penetrates the whole intellectual and moral atmosphere, and renders all phantasmic and ludicrously strange. Yet all these things are seen and felt as a child might have seen and felt them—are just like the world little Dombey or little Nell might have described, if they had wandered as far, and been able to put their impressions upon paper.

It is not to be lost sight of, as being a most significant and striking fact, that Dickens is greatest when most personal and lyrical, and that he is most lyrical when he puts himself in a child's place, and sees with a child's eyes. In the centre of his best stories sits a little human figure, dreaming, watching life as it might watch the faces in the fire. Little Oliver Twist, little David Copperfield, little Dombey, little Pip (in "Great Expectations"), wander in their turn through Queer Land, wander and wonder; and life to them is quaint as a toyshop and as endless as a show. And where Dickens does *not* place a veritable child as the centre of his story, as in "Little Dorrit" or "Bleak House," he employs instead a soft, wax-like, feminine, *child-like* nature, like Amy Dorrit or Esther Summerson, which may be supposed to bear the same sort of relation to the world as children

of smaller growth, and to feel the world with the same intensity. In any case, in any of his best passages, whether humorous or pathetic, emotion precedes reflection, as it does in the case of a child or of a great lyric poet. The first flash is seized; the picture, whether human or inanimate, is taken instantaneously and steeped in the feeling of the instant. Thus, when Carker first appears upon the scene in "Dombey and Son," the author, with a quick infantine perception, first notices "two unbroken lines of glistening teeth, whose regularity and whiteness were quite distressing," and in another moment perceives that in the same person's smile there is "something like the snarl of a cat." With any other author but the present this first impression would possibly fade; but with him, as with a child, it grows and enlarges, till the white teeth of Carker absolutely haunt the reader, and in Carker's every look and gesture is seen a feline resemblance. The feeling never disappears for a moment. "Mr. Carker reclined against the mantelpiece. In whose sly look and watchful manner; in whose false mouth, stretched but not laughing; in whose spotless cravat and very whiskers; *even in whose silent passing of his left hand over his white linen and his smooth face:* there was something desperately cat-like." And the further the book proceeds the more is the feline metaphor pursued, so that when Carker is planning the downfall of Edith Dombey we all feel to be watching, with intense interest, a cat in the act to spring. "He seemed to purr, he was so glad. And in some sort Mr. Carker, in his fancy, basked upon a hearth too. Coiled up snugly at certain feet, he was ready for a spring, or for a tear, or for a scratch, or for a velvet touch, as the humour seized him. Was there any bird in a cage that came in for a share of his regards?" Nay, so unmistakable is his nature that it even provokes Diogenes the dog; for "as he picks his way so softly past the house, glancing up at the windows, and trying to make out the pensive face behind the curtain looking at the children opposite, the rough head of Diogenes came clambering up close by it, and the dog, regardless of all soothing, barks and howls, as if he would tear him limb from limb. Well spoken, Di!" adds the author; "so near your mistress! Another and another, with your head up, your eyes flashing, and your vexed mouth wringing, for want of him. Another, as he picks his way along. You have a good scent, Di,—cats, boy, cats!"

Note, here, the positive enchantment which this lyrical feeling casts over every subject with which it deals. There can be no mistake about it—we are in Fairyland; and every object we perceive, animate or inanimate, is quickened into strange life. Wherever the good person goes all good things are in league with him, help him, and struggle for him; trees, flowers, houses, bottles of wine, dishes of meat rejoice with him, and enter into him, and mingle identities with him. He, literally "brightening the sunshine," fills the place

where he moves with fairies and attendant spirits. Read, as an illustration of this, the account of Tom Pinch's drive in "*Martin Chuzzlewit*." But wherever the bad person goes, on the other hand, only ugly things sympathise. He darkens the day; his baleful look transforms every fair thing into an ogre. The door-knockers grin grimly, the door-hinges creak with diabolical laughter. There is not a grain of good in him, not a gleam of hope for him. He is, in fact, scarcely a human being, but an abstraction, representing Selfishness, Malice, Envy, Sham-piety, Hate; moral ugliness of some sort represented invariably by physical ugliness of another sort. He, of course, invariably gets beaten in the long run. This is all as it ought to be—in a fairy-tale.

The pleasantest creatures in this pleasant dream of life, seen by our good Genie with the heart of a child, are (undoubtedly) the Fools. Dickens loved these forms of helplessness, and he has created the brightest that ever were imagined—Micawber, Toots, Twemlow, Mrs. Nickleby, Traddles, Kit Nubbles, Dora Spenlow, the gushing Flora,* and many others whose names will occur to every reader. They are perhaps truer to nature than is generally conceded. The critical criterion finds them silly, and the pathos wasted over them somewhat maudlin. The public loves them, and feels the better for them; for, however wrong in the head, they are all right at heart—indeed, with our good Genie, a strong head and a tender heart seldom go together, which is a pity. There can be no doubt that the creator of these creatures was violently irrational, had an intense distaste for hard facts, and an equally intense love for sentimental chuckle-heads.

"The heart, the heart, if that beats right,
Be sure the brain thinks true!"

It may be observed, in deprecation, that Dickens's good people, and especially his Fools, too often wear their hearts "upon their sleeves," and give vent to the disagreeable "gush" so characteristic of his falsetto pathetic passages, such as the well-known scene between Doctor and Mrs. Strong in "*David Copperfield*":—

"'Annie, my pure heart!' said the doctor, 'my dear girl!'

"'A little more! a very few words more! I used to think there were so many whom you might have married, who would not have brought such charge and trouble on you, and who would have made your home a worthier home. I used to be afraid that I had better have remained your pupil, and almost your child. I used to fear that I was so unsuited to your learning and wisdom. If all this made me shrink within myself (as indeed it did), when I had that to tell, it was

* Not the least interesting portion of Mr. Forster's *Life* is the part showing us that Dora and Flora are photographs from the life, taken at different periods from the same person, and that this person was regarded by Dickens himself at one time just as *Copperfield* regarded Dora, and at a later period just as *Clennam* regarded Mrs. F.!

still because I honoured you so much, and hoped that you might one day honour me.'

"That day has shone this long time, Annie," said the doctor, 'and can have but one long night, my dear.'

"Another word! I afterwards meant—steadfastly meant, and purposed to myself—to bear the whole weight of knowing the unworthiness of one to whom you had been so good. And now a last word, dearest and best of friends! The cause of the late change in you, which I have seen with so much pain and sorrow, and have sometimes referred to my old apprehension—at other times to lingering suppositions nearer to the truth—has been made clear to-night; and by an accident. I have also come to know, to-night, the full measure of your noble trust in me, even under that mistake. I do not hope that any love and duty I may render in return will ever make me worthy of your priceless confidence; but with all this knowledge fresh upon me, I can lift my eyes to this dear face, revered as a father's, loved as a husband's, sacred to me in my childhood as a friend's, and solemnly declare that in my lightest thought I had never wronged you; never wavered in the love and the fidelity I owe you!'

"She had her arms round the doctor's neck, and he leant his head down over her, mingling his grey hair with her dark brown tresses.

"Oh, hold me to your heart, my husband! Never cast me out! Do not think or speak of disparity between us, for there is none, except in all my many imperfections. Every succeeding year I have known this better, as I have esteemed you more and more. Oh, take me to your heart, my husband, for my love was founded on a rock, and it endures!'"—"David Copperfield," chap. xlv., pp. 402, 403. "Charles Dickens' Edition.")*

There is, of course, far too much of this sort of thing in Dickens's pictures, but it does not go beyond bad *drawing*. His conception of the pathetic circumstances is always psychologically right, only he has too little experience not to make it theatrical. A child might think such a scene, on or off the stage, very affecting. And why does it only repel grown-up people? For the very reason that it is childishly and absurdly candid, that the speakers in it lack the loving reticence of full-grown natures, that it is full of "words, words, words," from which proud and affectionate men and women shrink. Our good Genie's pets were far too fond, children-like, of pouring out their own emotions; they lacked the adult reserve. This is a fault they share with many contemporary creations, such as Browning's "Balaustion," whose

"O so glad

To tell you the adventure!"

and general guttural liquidity of expression, is quite as bad in itself (and far worse in its place) as anything in Dickens.

Even more precious than the Fools are, in our eyes, the Impostors. What a gallery; alike, yet how different! Pecksniff,

* Our references throughout the article are to this edition. To those who find the library edition too expensive or too cumbrous for common use, we can recommend the "Charles Dickens." It has, however, one great blemish, which had better be rectified at once, if it is to be really valuable. There is *no index of chapters or contents* to any of the volumes, so that for all purposes of reference it is almost useless.

Pumblechook, Turveydrop, Casby, Bounderby, Stiggins, Chadband, Snawley, the Father of the Marshalsea! Although a brief inspection of these gentlemen show them all to belong to the same family, each in turn comes upon us with pristine freshness. They are infinitely ridiculous and quite Elf-like in their moral flabbiness.

And this brings us to one point upon which we would willingly dwell for some time, did space permit us. A great humorist like our good Genie, is the very sweetener and preserver of the earth, is the most beneficent Angel that walks abroad; for it is a most cunning and delightful law of mental perception, that as soon as any figure presents itself to us in a funny light, hate for that figure is impossible. If you have any enemy, and if any peculiarity of his makes you smile or laugh, be sure that you and he are closer united than you know. Humour and love are twin brothers, one beautiful as Eros, the other queer as Incubus, but both made of the very same materials; and therefore, to call a man a great humorist is simply to call him the most loving and loveable type of humanity that we are permitted to study and enjoy. And this, all the world feels, was Charles Dickens. It would be hard indeed to over-estimate what this good Genie has done for human nature, simply by pointing out what is odd in it. Here come Hypocrisy, Guile, Envy, Self-conceit; you are ready to spring upon and rend them; yet when the charm is spoken, you burst out laughing. What comical figures! You couldn't think of hurting them! Your heart begins to swell with sneaking kindness. Poor devils, they were made thus; and they are so absurd! Fortunately for humanity, this comical perception has grown with the growth of the world. Mystic touches of it in Aristophanes sweetened the Athenian mind when philosophy and the dramatic muse were souring and curdling, and at the mad laughter of Rabelais the cloud-pavilion of monasticism parted to let the merry sky peep through. But the deep human mirth of the popular heart was as yet scarcely heard. Shakspeare's humour, even more than Chaucer's, is of the very essence of divine quiddity. Between Shakspeare and Dickens, only one humorist of the truly divine sort rose, fluted magically for a moment, and passed away, leaving the Primrose family as his legacy to posterity. Swift's humour was of the earth, earthy; Gay's was shrill and wicked; Fielding's was judicial, with flashes of heavenlike promise; Smollett's was cumbrous and not spiritualising; Sterne's was a mockery and a lie (shades of Uncle Toby and Widow Wadman, forgive us, but it is true!); and—not to catalogue till the reader is breathless—Scott's was feudal, with all the feudal limitations, in spite of his magnificent scope and depth. Entirely without hesitation we affirm that there is more true humour, and consequently more helpful love, in the pages of Dickens than in all the writers we have mentioned put together; and that, in *quality*, the humour of Dickens is richer, if less harmonious, than that of

Aristophanes ; truer and more human than that of Rabelais, Swift, or Sterne ; more distinctively unctuous than even that of Chaucer, in some respects the finest humorist of all ; a head and shoulders over Thackeray's, because Thackeray's satire was radically unpoetic ; certainly inferior to that of Shakspeare only, and inferior to *his* in only one respect—that of humorous pathos. It is needless to say that in the last-named quality Shakspeare towers supreme, almost solitary. Falstaff's death-bed scene* is, taken relatively to the preceding life, and history, and rich unction of Sir John, the most wonderful blending of comic humour and divine tenderness to be found in any book—infinite in its suggestion, tremendous in its quaint truth, penetrating to the very depths of life, while never disturbing the first strange smile on the spectator's face. Yes ; and therefore overflowing with unutterable love.

The humour of our good Genie seems, when we begin to analyse it, a very simple matter—merely the knack, as we have before said, of seeing crooked—of posing every figure into oddity. A tone, a gesture, a look, the merest trait, is sufficient ; nay, so all-sufficient does the trait become that it absorbs the entire individuality ; so that Mr. Toots becomes a Chuckle, Mr. Turveydrop incarnate Department, Uriah Heep a Cringe ; so that Newman Noggs cracks his finger-knuckles, and Carker shows his teeth, whenever they appear ; so that Traddles is to our memory a Forelock for ever sticking bolt upright, and Regaud (in "Little Dorrit") an incarnate Hook-Nose and Moustache eternally meeting each other. Enter Dr. Blumber : "The Doctor's walk was stately, and calculated to impress the juvenile mind with solemn feelings. It was a sort of march ; but when the Doctor put out his right foot, he gravely turned upon his axis, with a semicircular sweep towards the left ; and when he put out his left foot, he turned in the same manner towards the right. So that he seemed, at every stride he took, to look about him as though he were saying, 'Can anybody have the goodness to indicate any subject, in any direction, on which I am uninformed ?'" Enter Mr. Flintwinch : "His neck was so twisted, that the knotted ends of his white cravat actually dangled under one ear ; his natural acerbity and energy always contending with a second nature of habitual repression, gave his features a swollen and suffused look ; and altogether he had a weird appearance of having hanged himself at one time or other, and of having gone about ever since, halter and all, exactly as some timely hand had cut him down." This first impression never fades or changes as long as we see the figure in question.

Akin to this perception of Oddity, and allied with it, is the perception of the Incongruous. Never did the brain of human creature see stranger resemblances, funnier coincidences, more side-splitting discrepancies. This man was for all the world like (what should he say ?)

* See *King Henry V.*, act ii., scene 3.

a Pump, the more so as his feelings generally ran to water. That man was a Spider, such a comical Spider,—“horny-skinned, two-legged, money-getting, who spun webs to catch unwary flies, and retired into holes until they were entrapped.” Yonder trips the immaculate Pecksniff, “carolling as he goes, so sweetly and with so much innocence, that he only wanted feathers and wings to be a Bird.”

“The summer weather in his bosom was reflected in the breast of nature. Through deep green vistas, where the boughs arched overhead, and showed the sunlight flashing in the beautiful perspective; through dewy fern, from which the startled hares leaped up, and fled at his approach, by mantled pools, and fallen trees, and down in hollow places, rustling among last year’s leaves, whose scent woke memory of the past, the placid Pecksniff strolled. By meadow gates and hedges fragrant with wild roses; and by thatched-roofed cottages, whose inmates humbly bowed before him as a man both good and wise; the worthy Pecksniff walked in tranquil meditation. The bee passed onward, humming of the work he had to do; the idle gnats, for ever going round and round in one contracting and expanding ring, yet always going on as fast as he, danced merrily before him; the colour of the long grass came and went, as if the light clouds made it timid as they floated through the distant air. The birds, so many Pecksniff consciences, sang gaily upon every branch; and Mr. Pecksniff paid his homage to the day by enumerating all his projects as he walked along.”—(“Martin Chuzzlewit,” p. 302.)

Here, as elsewhere, the whole power lies in the incongruity of the whole comparison, in the reader’s perfect knowledge that Pecksniff is a Humbug and an Impostor, and that there is nothing bird-like or innocent in his nature. The vein once struck, there was nothing to hinder our good Genie from working it for ever. His path swarmed with oddities and incongruities; Wagner-like he mixed these together, and produced the Homunculus, Laughter. And just as the perception of oddity and incongruity varies in men, varies the enjoyment of Dickens. Quiddity for quiddity—the reader must give as well as receive; and if the faculty is not in him, he will turn away contemptuously. A weasel looking out of a hole is enough to convulse some people with laughter; they see a dozen odd resemblances. Other people, again, walk through all this Topsy-turvyland with scarcely a smile. Life in all its phases, great and small, seems perfectly congruous and ship-shape; much too serious a matter for any levity.

But it is time we were drawing these stray remarks to a close, or we may be betrayed into actual criticism—a barbarity we should wish to avoid. Truly has it been said, that the only true critic of a work is he who enjoys it; and for our part, our enjoyment shall suffice for criticism. The Fairy Tale of Human Life, as seen first and last by the good Genie of Fiction, seems to us far too delightful to find fault with—just yet. A hundred years hence, perhaps, we shall have it assorted on its proper shelf in the temple of Fame. We know well enough (as, indeed, who does not know?) that it contains much sham

pathos, atrocious bits of psychological bungling, a little fine writing, and a thimbleful of twaddle; we know (quite as well as the critical know) that it is peopled, not quite by human beings, but by Ogres, Monsters, Giants, Elves, Phantoms, Fairies, Demons, and Will-o'-the-Wisps; we know, in a word, that it has all the attractions as well as all the limitations of a Story told by a Child. For that diviner oddity, which revels in the Incongruity of the very Universe itself, which penetrates to the spheres and makes the very Angel of Death share in the wonderful laughter, we must go elsewhere—say to Jean Paul. Of the Satire, which illuminates the inside of Life and reveals the secret beating of the heart, which unmasks the Beautiful and anatomizes the Ugly, Thackeray is a greater master; and his tears, when they do flow, are truer tears. But for mere magic, for simple delightfulness, commend us to our good Genie. He came, when most needed, to tell the whole story of life anew, and more funnily than ever; and it seems to us that his child-like method has brightened all life, and transformed this awful London of ours—with its startling facts and awful daily phenomena—into a gigantic Castle of Dream. And now, alas! the magician's hand is cold in death. What a liberal hand that was, what a great heart guided it, few knew better than the writer of this paper.

“ But he is fled

Like some frail exhalation, which the dawn
 Robes in its golden beams,—ah! he is fled!
 The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,
 The child of grace and genius. Heartless things
 Are done and said in the world, and many worms
 And beasts and men live on, and mighty earth,
 From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,
 In vesper low or joyous orison,
 Lifts still its solemn voice; but he is fled—
 He can no longer know or love the shapes
 Of this phantasmal scene, who have to him
 Been purest ministers, who are, alas!
 Now he is not!”*

Now, all in good time, we get the story of his life; and let us hesitate a little, and know the truth better, ere we sit in judgment. Against all that can be said in slander, let our gratitude be the shield. Against all that may have been erring in the Man (few, nevertheless, to our thinking, have erred so little), let us set the mighty services of the Writer. He was the greatest work-a-day Humorist that ever lived. He was the most beneficent Good Genie that ever wielded a pen.

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

* Shelley's "Alastor."

LITERARY LEGISLATORS.

II.—THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

THE Duke of Argyll is by hereditary position a legislator ; but, although he has written books on questions of public policy, spoken on a great number of subjects in the House of Lords, and held office as Lord of the Privy Seal and Postmaster-General, he does not present himself to the mind as primarily a political person : whether statesman, tactician, or even critic. In the books which he wrote, comparatively early in life, on Church and other questions, he disclosed, as plainly as in his later writings, the essential characteristics of his mind. He is in politics and sociology a conservative Liberal, and if that phrase were admissible in another sphere, it would be applicable to the Duke as a thinker in theology and philosophy. His intellect moves with great caution, and not without something of the spirit which expresses itself in the proverbial saying, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." Yet his mind is exceedingly hospitable. Any idea which does not contradict what he holds to be ultimate truth he will entertain and treat with. But we should suppose it never would have been forward to go out in search of difficulties.* There is no speculative knight-errantry about him. He feels his way in every subject that he touches ; and even with a degree of punctiliousness which has an effect not quite cheerful. The "Reign of Law" is as readable as any book on such a subject could possibly be. In passages of brief and rapid metaphysical criticism, it is even lively—to those who care for such reading. The Notes at the end of the later editions are particularly pointed. The whole of that portion of the work which relates to birds is most attractive. Everywhere the range of illustration is wide and varied, and the use of quotation happy. And yet we never escape from the sensation that we are in the presence of a very cautious and punctilious writer. There was a Scotch professor of logic who, being urged to go and fight a duel with a man who called him a liar, said, with perfect *bonhomie*, "What for fight him ? Let him pruv it, sir ; let him pruv it !" This form of equanimity is in the very spirit of the Duke. He does not want to fight—he does not desire to push controversies into any extraneous issues ; but when men of science keep on repeating what they do repeat of Primeval Man, for

* Except as all good thinking implies a forecast of ultimate consequences.

instance, the Duke writes about two hundred quiet pages, the motto of which might well be — "Let 'em pruv it, sir; let 'em pruv it!" It is the same in all his writings. Take care — do not go too fast; these are the words that are sounding in our ears as we read both the "Reign of Law" and "Primeval Man." They are admirable words, and just those which were needed in the present philosophical situation. Their usefulness, and the habit of mind they indicate, is not likely, I hope, to be undervalued by the present writer, whose cry in these matters and some others has always been, "Not so fast." But it sometimes strikes a reader that the punctiliousness is a little wire-drawn; and then the better and higher quality to which it hangs on runs risk of being disrated. The importance of definition of terms is a favourite topic with the Duke, as it has been with other thinkers. But, hazardous thing as it is to say, I have seldom been able to discover that discussions of definition have much advanced good understanding in philosophy. On the contrary, they seem to me to have been curiously barren. And, instead of pleading for more definition, I should be disposed to plead, if pleading were of any use, for more imagination; more charitable apprehensiveness in the construction of other people's language. No kind of human intelligence is so helpless and so blundering in philosophic discussion as the forensic — yet the forensic intelligence is apt to be punctiliously definitive. Of course, words should be accurately used; but they very often are when they are said not to be. Philosophical writing, like all other, must contain *refracted* lights, and the meaning of a writer is best gathered by what he is entitled to expect from us, — namely, that we should give ourselves up to him till we have got into the natural swing of his thought and manner. Otherwise we may "nag" and niggle for ever. I very much doubt if the greatest thinkers, those who have contributed the largest number of (after all) clear substantive ideas to philosophy, have been the most remarkable for accurate definition of the kind which will bear the test of white-light criticism. Indeed, the facts are palpably the other way, and the reasons are plain. The mathematician who, being invited to dinner in Eaton Square, turned indignantly back homeward when, on getting there, he found the place was only a parallelogram, was not the man to have thought of quaternions. In the "Reign of Law" the Duke of Argyll quotes Mr. Mill as defining the Positive as distinguished from the Theological mode of Thought in this way — "that all phenomena without exception are governed by invariable laws, *with which no volitions, either natural or supernatural, interfere.*" The italics are those of his Grace, and so are those in the next quotation which he gives from Mr. Mill: — "The Theological mode of explaining phenomena was once universal, *with the exception, doubtless, of the familiar facts which, being even then seen to be controllable by human Will, belonged*

already to the Positive mode of Thought." And the Duke observes that these two passages "stand in curious contrast with each other." But how do they? It would never have struck me to say so. What Mr. Mill means (and the meaning is permitted dimly to emerge after three pages of criticism from the Duke) is that, though man's will may use laws for the control of facts, it cannot "interfere with" the action of those laws. The Duke says it can * and does. If so, the passages are contradictory; but the contrary is Mr. Mill's postulate, the verbal criticism is beside the mark. The Duke says:—"In this sense phenomena are not governed by Invariable Laws, because phenomena are never the result of individual Forces, but are always the result of the conditions under which several Forces are combined, and these conditions are always variable." But, surely, the conditions may be variable, and the laws not?

Take another example of what we mean by a false punctiliousness. In the *Contemporary Review* for January, 1872, the Duke, in an article "On Hibernicisms in Philosophy," condemns Sir William Hamilton's phrase "The Unconditioned" as "simply nonsense,"—because "the is the definite article, and applicable only to things or ideas capable of definition; but nothing is capable of definition which has no conditions." Well, the present writer has said that "the whole difficulty (in this case) is founded upon scholastic inflexibilities of language, and is simply a roundabout way of saying that in order to the conception of the Absolute, the first meaning is that there should be nobody to conceive it." But this—which looks at first exactly what the Duke says—applies to the *argument* in the case, and not to the provisional use of the word Unconditioned—the objection to which I fail to understand. In the very next paragraph the Duke condemns the modern use of the word "unthinkable." Here again, the objection seems trivial—the meaning of the current use of the word being as plain as daylight. When we say a certain thing is "unthinkable," we only mean that if we try to "think" it, we involve ourselves in an absurdity of the first order. The Duke immediately proceeds to instance as accurate the proposition, "we cannot conceive any boundary to Space." But how on earth does this differ from saying "A boundary to Space is unthinkable,"—except that the latter form of speech has the advantage in brevity and point? The Duke says that the two cases are "carefully to be distinguished." Of course anybody who pleases

* In Mr. MacDonald's Discourses on the Miracles and in a Christmas-day sermon by a Roman-Catholic prelate, I saw it stated that it is a law that a dropped stone will fall to the earth; but that if a hand interposed to catch the stone prevents its reaching the earth, "a higher law" has intervened to control the first. If this is what the Duke means, I should like to hear what some great physicist has to say upon the subject. Certainly, "I have not so learned" the law of gravitation.

may say this, and go on saying it for ever, but if he fails to exhibit the essential distinction, he makes no headway. The criticism on Mr. Mill's use of the phrase "potentiality of sensation" I find equally wide of truth. And yet upon the essential question here, I am entirely with the Duke, and entirely against Mr. Mill. With the rest of the paper I have the honour of agreeing; and there is often an almost exact verbal correspondence between the Duke's phraseology and that of the present writer on these matters. There is an identical use of such phrases as "getting behind" ultimate facts; a similarly worded condemnation of the barren pedantry of trying to escape from the necessary complications of inevitable "anthropomorphic" language; and the process which the Duke distinguishes as making a "bull" is over and over described by the present pen, as "locking the door on the inside and trying to carry off the key outwards." It is not, then, any want of general agreement which makes me fancy that the Duke seriously prejudices the effect of his writings by what I have called over-punctiliousness. It is really by a sort of excessive punctiliousness of this kind that in dealing with Sir William Hamilton Mr. Mill sometimes drops down to a mere worrying of the topic, reminding you of a cat over a dead mouse; and sometimes actually entangles himself in coils of verbal absurdity—

" In a knot himself he ties,
Dreadful, with his head appearing
In the middle of his thighs;
Till the petrified spectator
Asks, in undisguised alarm,
' Which may be that warrior's body,
Which is leg and which is arm ? ' " *

And, besides, who is equal to these things? The author of the "Reign of Law" says, "Few birds are so invisible as the woodpecker." The essential element of a "bull" is there, as large as life. Again, it is in the *cogito, ergo sum*† of Descartes,—which the Duke accepts as conclusive. On the other hand, he assigns among Philosophic Hibernicisms no place to one of the most palpable of them all—the denial of the freedom of the will. It is simply impossible to discuss the subject without positing in express terms as the necessary antecedent of the discussion the very thing which the advocates of necessity deny.

We think, then, that what is above all things needed in philosophical discussion is now, as it always was, more flexibility of intelligence and not greater stringency of definition. The number of cases

* It is so many years since I saw the "Bon Gaultier Ballads," that my memory may do this admirable verse some little wrong.

† Unless we read the words as an epigram, not as argument: just as we read the *nisi ipse intellectus* added by Leibnitz to the *Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*.

in which thinkers who appear to contradict each other might, by a little mediating comment, be got to see that they are really driving at the same thing, is, I am perfectly certain, very, very great indeed ; but the mediating comment required must be rather in the nature of humour or poetry than in that of definition. But if (supposing I am right in all this) the Duke of Argyll is over-punctilious, and so far liable to get into the wrong path (of course it is an open question), it is on account of a stability and a cautiousness of understanding which eminently qualify him for the position he has taken up in relation to current controversies. He is, roughly speaking, the thinker who has put on the drag, or applied the "skid" to the wheel when the carriage was going down an inclined plane. And this he has done with a seriousness and steadiness of grasp which must remind almost any one of Butler. He has not Butler's compact brevity of manner, nor was that kind of quality necessary ; but he has, even allowing for the difference of epoch, a hundred times Butler's general culture. For poetry he has evidently a quick and genuine feeling, and every now and then we come across some small but decisive indication of wide general reading. Whatever he writes, he is kindly and respectful in dealing with others, and yet decided in maintaining his own position.

And to the "decided," let us hasten to add, clear-headed. Nothing can be more honourable to him than the straightforwardness with which, in the "Reign of Law," he pushes aside all the loose attempts to patch up the quarrel between the men of science and the men of theology. We hope we are at one with the Duke in this matter, and should be glad if others saw with the same eyes. If Religion is to be considered as *mere* matter of poetry or matter of emotion, then the sphere of Religion and the sphere of Science are indeed so different that they can be treated as things apart. But the moment we come to the question of intellectual justifications ; as soon as we begin to frame *propositions* in religion, there is no room for neutrality ; there must be agreement or contradiction, complete or partial. The position taken up by large numbers of men of science in the present day is, as our readers know, that all forms of Supernaturalism are in the nature of things inadmissible ; and the question whether there is anything in the "reign of " universal "law" to justify this repudiation is the main question considered in the Duke's principal work. It is not necessary to say that the present writer entirely and heartily holds with the Duke in maintaining that the question of Supernaturalism stands just where it did before what is called "modern scientific scepticism" was born or thought of. No candid and instructed person will affirm that the question of particular miracles, considered as matter of history, stands where it did—that is quite another thing. But, whatever others believe, the writer of these lines believes that quite apart from all such matters, the material for

establishing the moral and spiritual position and obligations of man has been, in fact, deposited, in some way, in the course of history, and that, whatever the theory of certain portions of those may be, they themselves are in essence the same as they always were.

The question whether particular miracles did or did not take place does not come within the scope of the Duke's book on the "Reign of Law," though he abundantly discloses the strength of his personal belief in what is usually called * historical Christianity. The argument of the volume is in the first place addressed to the question of the place which "miracle" would hold under a "reign of law" supposed to be admitted on all hands. So far as concerns the proof that there is nothing in such a "reign" that *a priori* makes "miracles" incredible, we perfectly follow the Duke, but we are not so clearly with him in all the attendant discussions. Yet we should very much like to feel sure we understood him fully upon the preliminary question, What *is* a miracle? Is the argument at all simplified or helped by the reference to Butler's Analogy?

The question, with what heart people who regard miracles as an interruption of an established order can follow the argument of Butler, never did, and does not now strike us as being either an interesting or a pertinent one. A person may hold, as we do, that the idea of miracles has nothing incredible in it, and that each particular case alleged must stand upon its own evidence, and yet be unable to receive the general argument of Butler in the "Analogy." One may also think that Butler proves too much upon this particular point, and even involves himself in contradictions. He asks whether there is any more presumption against miracles, all things considered, than there ever was against comets, or electricity, or magnetism, all things considered, by the person supposed to entertain any such presumption. He has just before been saying that the idea of a miracle is relative, and has reference to an established course of nature; and he urges that to the absolutely primeval human consciousness there would have been no "course of nature" to serve as a point of departure. But without replying that there *is* a course of nature involved in the automatic functions with their correlated conditions, it surely suggests itself here that this argument goes too far, or not far enough. Pushed to its lowest terms, it must mean one of two things—either (1) that everything is alike miraculous, or (2) that, under no circumstances, could anything be so. Each of these alternatives is another way of saying that there is no such thing as antecedent impossibility; or that when a thing has happened it has ceased to have the characteristics which would have made anyone think it

* I say "*usually* called," because the phrase has been used, also, by those who are understood not to believe in any of the miracles as matters of fact,—the Rev. James Martineau, for example: who, by the way, is one of those who have severely criticised the "Analogy."

reasonable to affirm beforehand that it was unlikely to happen. From first to last the whole notion of an "established course of nature" is treated as a mere football of discussion.

The opponents of historical Christianity as an authoritative revelation, appealing to "signs and wonders," considered by what the Duke calls "evidential," cannot fail to have replied, openly or secretly, to the whole of this part of the argument in some such terms as these:—"Under the pressure from without of the modern conception of Law, you have, in fact, shifted your ground, while assuming to maintain it. The question, as you now put it,* appears to be whether, admitting certain abstract religious ideas, it is probable that certain very unusual events happened. In that case we must first of all proceed to discuss the religious propositions supposed to be admitted (*e.g.* the being of a God, and His relations to men). But that is not what theologians have usually called upon us to do. Most of them implicitly, and some of them explicitly (*e.g.*, Chalmers in the "Astronomical Lectures") have called upon us to treat the question of revelation on its own sole footing, with reference to its miracles alleged as evidence. Is that what you now mean? It seems not; but if it is, then we say, we are prepared to consider particular questions of fact—*e.g.*, whether the man was raised from the dead or restored to sight; but, in that case, our inquiry will not be a religious one, and our *yea* or *nay* upon the evidence will carry no theological consequences. We may have to admit certain facts as curiously outside of our present generalisations; but we shall simply register the former and wait patiently till we see our way to amending the latter."

A plain man may well ask whether it is indeed true, as Butler says it is, that a miracle and the appearance of a comet or any of the facts of electricity stand at all upon any similar footing. It is customary to say that five hundred years ago men would have been burnt as wizards for performing scientific feats which are now common. But, common as the remark may be, is it true? Does it ring true? Did it ever carry conviction at once? Certainly it never did to me—never. The Duke observes that if, centuries ago, Professor Tyndall had exhibited ice in a red-hot crucible, as he has done at the Royal Institution in our day, he would probably have been himself subjected to a very unpleasant experiment in Heat. Well, it is possible that a mob might have set upon him, if he had boldly and without preparation performed such an experiment; but would any harm have been done to him, if he had paved the way for the thing, and shown other people the process, and the reasons for it? In any case, however, the reasons for treating him as a wizard would have been that they had a strong previous belief in the possibility of direct diabolic interference, and did not see that there was a process in the case—not simply that the thing

* Butler's treatment of the matter is, in my opinion, equivocal.

was unexpected. The neglect of these considerations has in the most candid Christian advocates all the effect of want of candour. In the meanwhile, all the usual references to savages, mediæval nations, and children are beside the mark. The real questions are, whether there is an "established course of nature in any such sense that apparent interruptions of that course carry with them any presumption in favour of a directly operative personal Will behind them."

The Duke has the following passage:—

"It is well worthy of remark that Locke, who laid great stress on the Christian miracles, as attesting the authority of those who wrought them, declines, nevertheless, to adopt the common definition of that in which miraculous agency consists. 'A miracle, then,' he says, 'I take to be a sensible operation, which, being above the comprehension of the spectator and, in his opinion, contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be Divine.' And in reply to the objection that this makes a miracle depend on the opinions or knowledge of the spectator, he points out that this objection cannot be avoided by any of the definitions commonly adopted; because it being agreed that a miracle must be that which surpasses the force of nature in the established steady laws of cause and effect, nothing can be taken to be a miracle but *what is judged to exceed those laws*. Now, every one being able to judge of those laws only by his own acquaintance with nature, and his own notions of its force, which are different in different men, it is unavoidable that that should be a miracle to one man which is not so to another.' In this passage Locke recognises the great truth that we can never know what is above nature unless we know all that is within nature. But he misses another truth, quite as important,—that a miracle would still be a miracle, even though we did know the laws through which it was accomplished, provided those laws, though not beyond human knowledge, were beyond human control. We might know the conditions necessary to the performance of a miracle, although utterly unable to bring those conditions about. Yet a work performed by the bringing about of conditions which are out of human reach would certainly be a work attesting superhuman power."

Now Locke's definition is unquestionably a very awkward one to manipulate, but neither of the Duke's comments "finds" me. Is it, first of all, "a great truth that we can never know what is above Nature unless we know all that is within Nature?" If so, it follows that, supposing a miracle to be defined as something "above Nature," we can never know a miracle at all. For "know all that is within Nature" (in any conceivable sense of these words), we certainly never shall, either in this world or in the next. But it would still remain to ask, Can we, or can we not have such a prolonged and, so to speak, ramifying experience of the regular action of certain laws, methods, or processes to certain ends, as to be entitled to regard any alleged interruption of the regularity as implying a greater degree of improbability than that the evidence for the interruption should be untrustworthy? The second half of what the Duke says is, if I understand the bare words, the most perplexing thing in the book. If "a work performed by the bringing about of conditions which

are out of human reach, although we knew the laws through which it was accomplished, would still be a miracle," then, again, everything is miraculous—the ebb and flow of the tide, for example, or the precession of the equinoxes. For here we know the "laws," but the "conditions" are "out of our reach." If "*a work attesting superhuman power*" and *miracle* are interchangeable terms, then Professor Tyndall and Mr. Herbert Spencer believe in miracle as much as Dr. McCosh. In other words, nothing is miraculous *because* everything is.

After the first chapter on "The Supernatural," comes an able discussion of the various senses in which the word Law may be used; but the general character of the argument is not changed, nor, in strictness, is any essential new element introduced into it after the first chapter. That is to say, we know at once, from what the Duke has to say of the Supernatural, what ground he will subsequently take, and how he will probably amplify his treatment of the topics that must arise. The chapter entitled "Contrivance a Necessity" we entirely accept, with much gratitude for the beauty of the illustrative facts about birds, and for a new view of the question of flying. The treatment of the subject of "Necessity" (the "Reign of Law in the Human Mind") is, in my opinion, masterly. The only thing I wonder at is the patience with which the Duke handles transparent fallacies. Up to a certain point, and that a decisive point, the subject itself is clear; beyond that point all talk about it is as "bootless as the Greek slave, and as hollow as a bamboo." But the Duke of Argyll has contrived to make his treatment of the topic interesting to the very last. It is more than a quarter of a century since I spent some careful thought upon the subject, and shelved it for ever, as far as my own doubts were concerned. Yet I have read every word of the Duke's with—to my own great surprise—re-awakened interest in the subject. It is said that two or more Scotchmen will discuss "Necessity" over the third tumbler, and then adjourn the question indefinitely for future tumblers. If so, it must surely be because they want something craggy to break their minds upon, as Byron put it. The elements of the question are really so ludicrously simple.

In the chapter on "Law in Politics," I, unhappily, lose hold of my author so completely, that any discussion of it would be worse than useless. I cannot even see how the question of what the Duke calls Law in Politics can be taken as co-ordinated with that of "Law" as it stands in the rest of the book. But in the "Notes" at the end (replying to various criticisms), I find myself again at home; and in every one of them the Duke appears to me *easily* victorious over his critic. I am strongly tempted to do myself the honour of quoting one case of correspondence of comment between him and myself, which will at least prove that if I fail to follow him in a

few places, it is not for want of fundamental sympathy with his treatment of some of the wider questions. First, the Duke:—

"Mr. Mill pleads [here] that he must use common language, but that the whole of this language has its own special meaning under the Psychological Theory. This may be true; but there are certain words which must have the same meaning under all theories; and, in spite of his efforts, he is compelled to employ words which show that neither he nor any one else can maintain consistently a purely subjective conception of matter,—that is to say, a conception which dispenses with an external agency or force. He says that 'almost all philosophers, who have narrowly examined the subject, have decided that substance need only be postulated as a support for phenomena, or as a bond of connection to hold a group or series of otherwise unconnected phenomena together.' Mr. Mill goes on with much simplicity: 'Let us only then *think away* the support, and suppose the phenomena to remain, and to be held together in the same groups and series by *some other agency*, or without any agency *but an internal law*—and every consequence follows without substance, for the sake of which substance is assumed.' The demand here made upon us, to '*think away*' the support of phenomena, is certainly made less formidable when, in the next breath, we are told to *think it back again* under another form of words, as 'another agency,' or as an 'internal law.'

"The same vain attempt to get behind ultimate ideas may be traced in the word 'Permanent,' with which Mr. Mill qualifies matter considered as 'A possibility of sensation.' The new formula is 'A *permanent* possibility of sensation.' Why permanent? Permanent means enduring. But what has the element of time to do with it? The percipient minds are not permanent, so far as the sensations of their existing organism is concerned. In what sense, then, are the 'possibilities of sensation' permanent? What is it that is described as permanent? Not the sensations, not the individual sentient beings. What then? Clearly the power or agency which causes, or is capable of exciting sensations in organisms that are, or that are to be. Here, then, we have the ideas of externality and of causation brought back under the covering of time."

And now the other, and much worse, writer:—

"On page 251, a footnote of Mr. Spencer's exhibits, to my thinking, the difficulties into which we cannot but be driven if we attempt to get rid of what is called 'anthropomorphism' of expression. Mr. Spencer condemned, to Professor Huxley, the phrase 'conservation of force,' because it implies a conserver and an act of conserving; 'and also because it does not imply the existence of the force before that particular manifestation of it with which we commence.' Professor Huxley suggested '*persistence of force*,' and Mr. Spencer adopted it, saying, 'This entirely meets the first of the two objections.' But I would ask, *how* does it? If conservation implies a conserver and an act of conserving, surely, '*persistence*'—read the word as rigidly as you please—implies *an entity* that persists, and an act of persistency? The mere presence of the second objection (which, however, does not seem to me well-founded) should make this clear:—'*does not imply the existence of the force before the particular manifestation of it with which we commence.*' If for the word 'the force' you substitute Omnipotence, or God (striking out, for grammar's sake, the words 'of it'), you at once see that no phrase is *possible* which does not make the implication in question. Nor is there."

The second of the recent and more important books of the Duke of Argyll, "*Primeval Man*," is one which I should have thought would have been found more generally interesting than the "*Reign*

of Law," the nature of the argument lying very much more within the range of ordinary readers, and the facts being presented with masterly clearness. But probably the beautiful chapters which relate chiefly to birds and the mechanism of flight have made the "Reign of Law" a deeply attractive book to hundreds of readers who do not care much to consider "permanent possibilities of sensation" and similar matters. "Primeval Man" does not appear, in fact, to have commanded so large a circulation as the "Reign of Law," though a decidedly large one; and there is no accounting for the fortunes of books.

In one place only can I distinctly assert that the Duke of Argyll is wrong. My estimate of "phrenology" as a "science" is probably not unlike his own. But I know of no phrenological authority who ever said that the brain "manifested" the "moral sentiments" in any such sense as that in which the Duke employs the word "manifested." Most of them have either adopted or gone near to adopting the error which he denounces (and which writers like Mr. Lewes adopt though they reject phrenology), namely, that psychology can ever find a physiological *basis*. Yet it will be found that Spurzheim constantly adopts the *a priori* method in constructing his scheme. He distinctly attributes his own superiority (as a psychologist) over Gall to his doing so. He constantly says in effect, "The facts of the Mind as we know them clearly demand that there should be such or such an organ, and by anatomical analogy it should be in such or such a part of the brain." And to his use of the process he attributes some of his most important "discoveries." It was quite impossible under those circumstances that he should really regard anatomy as the basis of psychology, whatever bent his words may occasionally have taken; and, indeed, he distinctly called the system "physiognomical." What its precise value was, supposing it to have been wholly true, is a wide question. But Spurzheim no more meant (I do not quite see how anybody can mean, though he may say he does) to treat physiology as the basis of psychology (*per se*) than Lavater intended so to treat the human face. He simply meant,— "The mind manifests itself through its organ, the brain; and this organ is subdivided." I may add that he does not profess to solve the problem of the Will, and that what he says of Necessity and Freedom might take the place of the Duke's chapter, and leave his argument *essentially* what it is now.

I must beg the reader not only to reject the idea that I suppose for one moment my remarks about the Duke's chief work are necessarily correct,—but to add this too—namely, that I have no doubt whatever that I have somewhere mistaken him. It always is so, and it always must be so in these discussions. Accordingly they should, much more frequently than is now common, be regarded as merely tentative,—as, in fact, attempts to approach to an understanding. It

is high time such attempts were made. Comte laid it down as probable that "a body of twenty thousand philosophers would always suffice for the spiritual wants of the five great Western nations." Let us hope, with trembling, that it may. But it won't, if we all go on at this rate. Yet who is to leave off first? I see just advertised a new System of Philosophy, by Mr. Shadworth H. Hodgson (I think)—Space, and Time, and the rest of it all over again. One thing is probable, that we may yet expect some fine work from the hand of the Duke of Argyll. And, whatever it is, it is sure to be touched with those deep-toned lights of seriousness and kindness, which go far towards making the "Reign of Law" the unusually attractive book it is.

I will just add that the Marquis of Lorne published a few years ago a book of travel, in which I certainly fancied I saw much of the peculiar equanimity and cautiousness of his father's own mind, and something too of another quality which I have often noticed as the promise of a *late* but powerful maturity.

HENRY HOLBEACH.

NOTE.—At the last moment, I add that the quotations from Mr. Mill which (as criticised by the Duke) are found in the first paragraph of this article, have rather an expository than a purely enunciatory ring with them. This is important; but the book itself is not before me.

PHIL BLOOD'S LEAP.

*A TALE OF THE GAMBUSINOS.**

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ST. ABE AND HIS SEVEN WIVES."

"THERE'S some think Injins pison . . ." [It was Parson Pete that spoke,
As we sat there, in the camp-fire glare, like shadows among the smoke
'Twas the dead of night, and in the light our faces shone bright-red,
And the wind all round made a screeching sound, and the pines roared overhead.

Ay, Parson Pete was talking: we called him Parson Pete,
For you must learn he'd a talking turn, and handled things so neat:
He'd a preaching style, and a winning smile, and, when all talk was spent,
Six-shooter had he, and a sharp bowie, to point his argument.

Some one had spoke of the Injin folk, and we had a guess, you bet,
They might be creeping, while we were sleeping, to catch us in the net;
And the half-asleep were snoring deep, while the others vigil kept,
But devil a one let go his gun, whether he woke or slept.]

"There's some think Injins pison, and others fancy 'em scum,
And most would slay them out of the way, clean into Kingdom Come;
But don't you go and make mistakes, like many dern'd fools I've known,
For dirt is dirt, and snakes is snakes, but an Injin's flesh and bone!"

* Gold-seekers.—Ed.

We were seeking gold in the Texan hold, and we'd had a blaze of
luck,
More rich and rare the stuff ran there at every foot we struck ;
Like men gone wild we toiled and toiled, and never seemed to tire,
The hot sun glared, and our faces flared, with the greed o' gain, like
fire.

I was Captain then of the mining men, and I had a precious life,
For a wilder set I never met at derringer and at knife ;
Nigh every day there was some new fray, and a shot in some one's
brain,
And the cussedest sheep in all the heap was an Imp of Sin, from
Maine,

Phil Blood. Well, he was six foot three, with a squint to make you
skear'd,
His face all scabb'd and twisted and stabb'd, with carroty hair and
beard,
Sour as the drink in Bitter Chink, sharp as a grizzly's squeal,
Limp in one leg, for a leaden egg had nick'd him in the heel.

He was the primest workman there !—'twas a sight to see him toil !
To the waist all bare, all devil and dare, the sweat on his cheeks like
oil ;
With pickaxe and spade in sun and shade he labour'd like darnation
But when his spell was over,—well ! he liked his recreation.

And being a crusty kind of cuss, the only sport he had
When work was over seemed to us a bit too rough and bad ;
For to put some lead in a fellow's head was the greatest fun in life,
And the only joke he liked to poke was the point of his precious knife.

But game to the bone was Phil, I'll own, and he always fought most
fair,
With as good a will to be killed as kill, true grit as any there ;

Of honour too, like me or you, he'd a scent, tho' not so keen,
Would rather be riddled thro' and thro', than do what he thought
mean.

But his eddication to his ruination had not been over nice,
And his stupid skull was choking full of vulgar prejudice ;
For a white man *he* was an *ekal*, free to be fought in open fray,
But an *Injin* a snake (make no mistake !) to scotch in any way.

"A serpent's hide has pison inside, and an *Injin* heart's as bad,—
He'll seem your friend for to gain his end, but they hate the white
like mad ;

Worse than the least of bird or beast, never at peace till dead,
A spotted Snake, and no mistake !" that's what he always said.

Well, we'd jest struck our bit of luck, and were wild as raving men,
When who should stray to camp one day, but Black Panther, the
Cheyenne ?

Drest like a Christian, all a-grin, the old one joins our band,
And tho' the rest look'd black as sin, he shakes me by the hand.

Now, the poor old cuss had been known to us, and I knew that he
was true,—

I'd have trusted him with life and limb as soon as I'd trust *you* ;
For tho' his wit was gone a bit, and he drank like any fish,
His heart was kind, he was well-inclined, as even a white could wish.

Food had got low, for we didn't know the run of the hunting-
ground,

And our hunters were sick, when, just in the nick, the friend in need
was found ;

For he knew the place like his mother's face (or better, a heap, you'd
say,

Since she was a squaw of the roaming race, and himself a cast-
away).

Well, I took the Panther into camp, and the critter was well content,
And off with him, on the hunting tramp, next day our party went,
And I reckon that day and the next we didn't hunger for food,
And only one in the camp look'd vex't--that Imp of Sin, Phil Blood.

Nothing would please his contrairy idees ! an Injin made him boil !
But he said nought, and he scowling wrought from morn to night at
his toil,
And I knew his skin was hatching sin, and I kept the Panther apart,
For the Injin he was too weak to see the depth of a white man's
heart !

One noon-day, when myself and the men were resting by the creek,
The red sun blazed, and we lay half-dazed, too tired to stir or speak ;
'Neath the alder-trees we stretched at ease, and we couldn't see the
sky,
For the lian-flowers in bright blue showers hung thro' the branches
high.

It was like a gleam of a fairy-dream, and I felt like earth's first Man,
In an Eden bower, with the yellow flower of a cactus for a fan ;
Oranges, peaches, grapes, and figs, cluster'd, ripen'd, and fell,
And the cedar scent was pleasant, blent with the soothing 'cacia smell.

The squirrels red ran overhead, and I saw the lizards creep,
And the woodpecker bright with the chest so white tapt like a sound
in sleep ;
I lay and dozed with eyes half closed, and felt like a three-year child,
And, a plantain blade on his brow for a shade, even Phil Blood look'd
mild.

Well, back jest then came our hunting men, with the Panther at
their head,
Full of his fun was every one, and the Panther's eyes were red,

And he skipt about with grin and shout, for he'd had a drop that day,
And he twisted and twirled, and squeal'd and skirl'd, in the foolish Injin way.

To the waist all bare Phil Blood lay there, with only his knife in his belt,
And I saw his bloodshot eye-balls flare, and I knew how fierce he felt,
When the Injin dances with grinning glances around him as he lies,
With his painted skin and his monkey grin,—and leers into his eyes.

Then before I knew what I should do, Phil Blood was on his feet,
And the Injin could trace the hate in his face, and his heart began to beat,
And "Get out o' the way," he heard them say, "for he means to hev your life!"
But before he could fly at the warning cry, he saw the flash of the knife.

"Run, Panther, run!" cried every one, and the Panther took the track,
With a wicked glare, like a wounded bear, Phil Blood sprang at his back.
Up the side so steep of the cañon deep the poor old critter sped,
And after him ran the devil's limb, till they faded overhead.

Now, the spot of ground where our luck was found was a queerish place, you'll mark,
Jest under the jags of the mountain crags and the precipices dark,
And the water drove from a fall above, and roared both day and night,
And those that waded beneath were shaded by crags to left and right.

Far up on high, close to the sky, the two crags leant together,
Leaving a gap, like an open trap, with a gleam of golden weather,

And now and then when at work the men lookt up they caught the bounds

Of the deer that leap from steep to steep, and they seemed the size o' hounds.

A pathway led from the beck's dark bed up to the crags on high,
And up that path the Injin fled, fast as a man could fly.
Some shots were fired, for I desired to keep the white cuss back ;
But I missed my man, and away he ran on the flying Injin's track.

Now all below is thick, you know, with 'cacia, alder, and pine,
And the bright shrubs deck the side of the beck, and the lian-flowers
so fine,
For the forest creeps all under the steepes, and feathers the feet of the
crags
With boughs so thick that your path you pick, like a steamer among
the snags.

But right above you, the crags, Lord love you ! are bare as this here
hand,
And your eyes you wink at the bright blue chink, as looking up you
stand.
If a man should pop in that trap at the top, he'd never rest hand or
leg,
Till neck and crop to the bottom he'd drop,—and smash on the
stones like an egg !

Now, the breadth of the trap, tho' it seemed so small from the place
below, d'ye see,
Was what a deer could easily clear, but a man—well, not for me !
And it happened, yes ! the path, I guess, led straight to that there
place,
And if one of the two didn't leap it, whew ! they must meet there face
to face.

"Come back, you cuss! come back to us! and let the critter be!"

I screamed out loud, while the men in a crowd stood gazing at them
and me;

But up they went, and my shots were spent, and I shook as they
disappeared,—

One minute more, and we gave a roar, for the Injin had leapt,—and
cleared!

A leap for a deer, not a man, to clear,—and the bloodiest grave
below!

But the critter was smart and mad with fear, and he went like a bolt
from a bow!

Close after him, came the devil's limb, with his eyes as wild as death,
But when he came to the gulch's brim, I reckon he paused for breath!

For breath at the brink! but—a white man shrink, when a red had
passed so neat?

I knew Phil Blood too well to think he'd turn his back dead beat!

He takes one run, leaps up in the sun, and bounds from the slippery
ledge,

And he clears the hole, but—God help his soul! just touches the
t'other edge!

One scrambling fall, one shriek, one call, from the men that stand
and stare,—

Black in the blue where the sky looks thro', he staggers, dwarf'd up
there—

The edge he touches, then sinks, and clutches the rock—my eyes
grow dim—

I turn away—what's that they say?—he's a-hanging on to the brim!

. . On the very brink of the fatal chink a wild thin shrub there grew,
And to that he clung, and in silence swung betwixt us and the blue,
And as soon as a man could run I ran the way I'd seen them flee,—
And I came mad-eyed to the chasm's side, and—what do you think
I see?

All up ? Not quite. Still hanging ? Right ! But he'd torn away
the shrub ;

With lolling tongue he clutch'd and swung—to what ? ay, that's the
rub !

I saw him glare and dangle in air,—for the empty hole he trod,—
Help'd by a *pair of hands* up there !—The Injin's ? Yes, by —— !

Now, boys, look here ! for many a year I've rough'd in this here
land—

And many a sight both day and night I've seen that I think grand ;
Over the whole wide world I've been, and I know both things and
men,

But the biggest sight I've ever seen was the sight I saw jest then.

I held my breath—so nigh to death the cuss swung hand and limb,
And it seem'd to me that down he'd flee, with the Panther after him ;
But the Injin at length puts out his strength, and another minute
past,

—And safe and sound to the solid ground he drew Phil Blood at last !

Saved ? True for you ! By an Injin too !—and the man he meant to
kill !

There all alone, on the brink of stone, I see them standing still ;
Phil Blood gone white, with the struggle and fright, like a great mad
bull at bay,

And the Injin meanwhile, with a half-skeer'd smile, ready to spring
away.

What did Phil do ? Well, I watched the two, and I saw Phil Blood
turn back,

Then he leant to the brink and took a blink into the chasm black,
Then, stooping low, for a moment or so, he drew his bowie bright,
And he chucked it down the gulf with a frown, and whistled, and
lounged from sight.

Hands in his pockets, eyes downcast, silent, thoughtful, and grim,
While the Panther, grinning as he passed, still kept his eyes on him ;
Phil Blood strolled slow to his mates below, down by a mountain
track,
With his lips set tight and his face all white,—and the Panther at his
back.

I reckon they stared when the two appeared ! but never a word Phil
spoke,
Some of them laughed and others jeered,—but he let them have their
joke ;
He seemed amazed, like a man gone dazed, the sun in his eyes too
bright,
And, in spite of their cheek, for many a week, he never offer'd to
fight.

And after that day he changed his play, and kept a civiler tongue,
And whenever an Injin came that way, his contrary head he
hung ;—
But whenever he heard the lying word, "*It's a LIE !*" Phil Blood
would groan ;
"*A Snake is a Snake, make no mistake ! but an Injin's flesh and bone !*"

DECEMBER 11, 1871.

OUR ACCOUNT WITH POSTERITY.

WHEN in my childhood I used to read or hear read that the Lord God put the man and the woman into a garden and said to them, "Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it," the words never used to carry any particular meaning with them. What poetry (such as a child could seize) might gather around them was hindered by an ugly though illuminated copy of the arms of the Butchers' Company which happened often to come under my eye, along with the arms of the other city guilds. In this picture, there were oxen and sheep, and butchers and knives, and underneath all the rest, the words "*Omnia subjecisti sub pedibus, oves et boves.*" And when I had learned a very little geography, especially as I was a great maker of maps, planispheres, and all that, a new and uneasy view of the subject came into my mind. I then learned that the earth was only twenty-four thousand miles round, and the speculation, what was to be done when it became full, fascinated me at once. Nor was that all. Where was I to go and plant the New Atlantis which I had, before I was ten years old, elaborated in my own mind? There seemed so very little unappropriated land left or likely to be left, that—yes, that I felt the prison-bars which ruffle the beating feathers as much as ever I have done since. You may laugh, but did you ever plan a Utopia?

The whole subject has often troubled me since then. I was in Fleet Street yesterday, and saw several nice-looking people, and several people who were not much to speak of either way—but there were too many of 'em. True, it is very difficult to be practically consistent in these matters. Malthus had children and so have I. The rule of political economy is that in a full country you must not have more children than will replace yourself and your wife when you die; because to have more would be unjust to posterity. But, really, these are very embarrassing subjects. Every man wishes well to his own children, and old people are equally fond even of their grandchildren. A centenarian at once infatuated and productive, would probably be fond even of his great-grandchildren; but yet it seems as if we must draw the line somewhere. We have been often urged by Mr. Mill and others to reduce the national debt in justice to posterity, and people do talk in that way when they get together in Parliament, or when they write books; but if at the time of the last Budget each individual had been asked privately, with an assurance that it should go no farther, whether he would rather

pay the extra twopence of income-tax or roll the burden forward upon posterity, I believe the objections to the latter process would have been immediately denounced as of a *doctrinaire* description. Who *are* posterity? Do we know there ever will be any? Even Comte, in propounding the Worship of Humanity or the Great Being, admits that it may at any moment be "compromised"—that is the word—through the action of some unforeseen cosmic force. Exactly. Besides, we have now established School Boards, and done all we can to enlighten our own children, and is it not probable that even if we did roll on our odd twopence or so now and then, posterity will by that time—I mean, by some time or other—have become clever enough to dodge difficulties of that kind? They may even be able to hand them over to another planet, for what we know. And this brings me back to the original topic of this paper—at least it will when I like to let it. For there are other matters in which we have been asked to exercise a sort of coddling forecast in regard to posterity. We have actually been asked to consider the probability of the exhaustion of our coal-fields. This is monstrous. Surely people could burn something else; or, at the worst, they might wear comforters in cold weather—even if there should in those days ever be any cold weather. But really, if we are to have artificial rain produced by the firing off of hundreds and thousands of artillery, why should we not have hot weather at will in some other way? True, there might be attendant inconveniences; and indeed that American man of science who has just been petitioning Congress to let him have the use of about ten thousand cannon (is it more or less?) for the purpose of calling down rain, does not appear to have considered the dreadful noise he would make. Yet, if during the illness of the Prince of Wales, some farmer in want of rain at half a mile from Sandringham (supposing there were such a person) had wanted to go on firing off Woolwich Infants day and night till he got a shower, public opinion would at once have interfered. And so with other matters—including, probably, the cosmic force which may at any time compromise us.

Yet there are some things in which I find I cannot help looking forward, and you may say, if you choose, that I am caring for posterity, without the least occasion for care. But even if I do contradict myself, what is that to you? If I may not contradict myself, pray who is it that I may contradict? When I contradict *you* you may call out, and take your natural remedy in contradicting back again. Anarchy? Very likely; and I contend that "there is much virtue in your" anarchy. The difficulty is that people will never try it long enough.

Besides, if I seem to be taking thought for posterity, it is, after all, in a matter that comes close home to myself in the first instance. A lady of property told me some time ago, quite in a casual way, that

she was going to employ certain open lands of hers for building purposes. I strenuously opposed this, and urged that the land as it was—all grass, and trees, and fern, and heath-flowers—was much better. Now I could not shake that old woman's resolve. She persisted in her building scheme, and the sweet bit of country is at this moment covered with houses, from which she actually derives some hundreds a year. The inhabitants of these houses are, as far as I can discover, the least interesting people in the world—not one of them who might not reasonably suggest the question, What on earth is the good of you? Yes, *on earth*—there it is! Now observe, and you will see what a paradox we shall come to. It is morally certain that, even though I could all but demonstrate the uselessness or even mischievousness of those people, yet if I were to go and put them out of existence even by a painless process, I should be indicted for murder (if I were caught, that is). Nay, more, if I had gone beyond the arts of expostulation with that old woman, and interfered aggressively with the building of those houses, I should have had the police after me. Yet—*now* we are nearing the paradox—if I had had the legal power of preventing the building of those houses on that fair land, and had done so, I should have been neither a murderer nor a disturber of the Queen's peace. Only, where would those people have had to go to? Observe—they must have gone somewhere. Everybody must go somewhere if he is to exist, and, therefore, in so far as I contributed or might have contributed, to prevent those people living anywhere, I was guilty of an act in the nature of murder. I was, in fact, going about, as far as lay in my power, to hunt them off the face of the earth.

But there is more paradox to come. It may be said that there is plenty of room for everybody; and it may again be said that you cannot hunt anybody off the face of the earth. And then there is the profound question of the right of any human being to appropriate land at all. It has been urged that to "own" even an inch of ground is a crime, because if you may own an inch you may own any number of inches, which implies the right to own the whole planet; and, consequently, to get rid of everybody but yourself—if you can. If you *can*—that is it! What with the law of gravitation, and what with the roundness of the earth, you cannot push anybody off into space—at least in the present state of physical science. The effect of boring right through to the other side, and dropping a man through may not have been considered; and it is clear that you might send a man up in a balloon to μ Scorpionis, or something of that description. Nobody can prove, either, that you might not better his condition for him by sending him there. But now look at the question of *owning* land. Everybody must own enough to stand upon, or else he cannot exist. He may chop and change about in his ownership—that is, he may go from one place to another—but standing room he

must have. Yet it is unpleasant to contemplate a future epoch at which every human being should have *only* standing room. In that case, unless restrictive measures were passed, we should soon come to an absolute owning of land; for in time people would be packed like herrings in a barrel, and then locomotion would be impossible, and so each person might be said to own the ground he stood upon.

It may be said that we shall never reach this pass, and I fully believe we never shall, but then how shall we avoid it? Mr. Herbert Spencer and the other biologists tell us that increase of intelligence is accompanied by decrease of reproductive power (in the long run). This is a pleasant hearing for intelligent people who have brought up families with care—to be told that they have had all their trouble for nothing. You go and fall in love, with all the wear and tear, and then you get married and have a family, regardless of expense; and then Biology comes and sponges it all out like a game of noughts-and-crosses on a slate! It sounds exactly like the hygienic method for a cucumber. Procure the finest frame-fruit you can. Soak it for an hour in salt water, and pour off the liquor. Season with best cayenne pepper, refined salt, choice oil from Lucca, and pure Tarragona vinegar. Then—throw it out of window. Why, it is just what I heard a 'bus conductor yesterday call (dashed) nonsense. However, there are other things similar in kind suggested. For instance, that we may in future have wars on a totally unprecedented scale of magnitude, and carried out by means of destructive engines that will kill a million or two at a stroke. Then, again, we may have immense, far-sweeping pestilences, on a scale to which the Black Death was as nothing. It has also been remarked that, as there are already too many people born in this country, we may as well take quietly anything that carries off a few babies—such as the badness of the milk, or the negligence of parents. On the other hand, we have been assured by a positivist writer, under whose pen the question arose of destroying weakly children at birth, that "Humanity cannot go back from its acquired instincts of tenderness and respect for life." I do not myself perceive why it "cannot;" it has done so in sections before now, and may do it again. Why should not the "acquired instincts of humanity" be "compromised" some day, as well as the "Great Being" itself? There are strange surprises. A governor-general of India prophesied that some fine morning all the British inhabitants would wake up with their throats cut. It was a "gashly" idea; but not more horrible than one of Bishop Butler's. Walking in the gardens of Durham palace, he turned short round on his secretary and asked him why mankind should not some day all go mad at once. Exactly. "What for no?" And then they might all "compromise" themselves in some way. Comte himself went mad of Mob on the brain; and that was how he came to worship the

Great Being. His case goes far to prove what I say, that there are already too many of 'em. You may say that there is no conceivable reason why the Great Being should compromise itself. But what do you know about it? The penny-a-liner in reporting a case of suicide, said, "No reason can be assigned for the rash act, the sum of seven and sixpence having being found in the pocket of the unfortunate deceased." The rest of the Universe might return a verdict "that the deceased"—i.e., the Great Being—"destroyed itself while in an unsound state of mind." If this should happen, my difficulties would be met. However, one thing is clear, people are beginning to consider what is to be done *when* there are too many of 'em.

Of course, it is obvious to say that there is plenty of room on the earth yet unoccupied. And that is true, and people do say it. Mr. Carlyle has been loud in calling upon us to reclaim waste lands. Waste lands! Sir, or madam, lend me your eyes, and read this:—

"So wound we up, till unawares we gain'd
The broad high table-land, and to our eyes,
Our dazzled, utterly astonish'd eyes,
Broke all that sea of heather, purple-toned,
A luscious carpet, far as eye could see,
Variously shaded, and the cotton-rush
Here and there flecking with its snow-white plume
The great expanse; and by us brown game-birds
Went whirring in sharp fear. Ne'er in my life
Had I seen such a sight, and I stood dumb
In awful wonder.

In a point of time
I seem'd to read long chapters, every word
Cramm'd full with meaning, and the strangest thoughts
Came over me; the great indwelling soul
Of all this beauty spake my heart within;
While in my veins a richer life-blood ran,

. I thought I heard
The stars all singing, though I saw them not,
And the earth swell the chorus; their song said,—
'Glory to God, who made the beautiful!'
'Glory to God!' I said, and down my cheeks
Tears rain'd for gladness, till I could not see
The heather or the sunshine."

Is that what you call "waste land?" And if a thousand fools go and squat on that heather reclaimed, what do you call it then? But there is the desert. Yes, there is; but is poetry to lose the benefit of the desert? And there is the prairie? "Very good, let us keep it." That also is poetic, and sweet, and clean. If you take away the primeval forest, and the prairie grass, and the wild horses, and put down on the land twenty thousand people like Brigham Young, who call their wives "our heifers," and keep a Danite band, have you bettered anything? Well, there is the sea. Yes, thank heaven, and

in heaven's name let us keep it! Yet people, in their selfish dislike of sea-sickness, are proposing to unite England and France by a bridge of one sort or another. I am myself a good sailor, but surely a bad one ought to feel that the grandeur of being nauseated by the Ocean was something to be set down to the good. It is, of course, ignoble to be upset by roast pig, or rum-punch, but if a man cannot stand being made sick by Cosmic Forces, he had better get out of their way altogether. Yet I feel uneasy about the Ocean. I don't believe engineers and speculators will let it alone for long. One of these days they will dredge, and go down in diving-bells, and reclaim the submerged Atlantic. Then, Europe and America will be joined again, and one of the Oceans will be gone. Does anybody believe that the Pacific will survive the disestablishment of the other? And on all this unclaimed surface people will go on living, and building houses, and laying down drain-pipes, and writing leading articles, and doing other things which they pleasantly call "highly civilised." Now is this a prospect which can be contemplated with equanimity? Not by me.

Even if every inch of the face of the globe were land built upon, there must come a time—unless something hinders—when it will hold no more in the usual way. It may then be possible for new generations to live in captive-balloons, or in "flats" built up to the clouds. I say nothing—I don't care—that is, supposing I live till then—but it has been with a feeling of relief that I have heard of the recent events. One is the theory of a Mr. Somebody (I forget his name), against whom Mr. Wallace and the editor of the *Field* brought an action for libel—that the earth is, after all, flat. If this prove true, we can push off an excess of population at the edge. They must take their chance, like the rest of us. The other thing that pleased me, was the discovery of a mistake in the accredited measurement of the earth's distance from the sun. Now, if there has been one blunder of this kind, why not another? May not the earth, after all, be sixteen thousand miles in diameter, and forty-eight thousand in circumference? And may not the moon be a great deal nearer than we suppose? May it not come so close at last that we shall be able to land passengers on it? If we are really nearing the sun, may it not be the design of the Cosmic Forces to provide the Great Being with a means of Cosmic Emigration? Or, to stop short of these plausible theories, may not the earth have a capacity of self-distension, proportioned to the increase of the inhabitants upon its surface? Shall it be a "law" that in a case of blocked blood-vessel the heart hypertrophies, and shall Mother Earth have no "law" which meets her case? Don't tell me about the preventive check, or this, that, or other "law" of diminishing reproduction; I would as soon trust in the Preventive Coast Guard for settling these matters.

In the meanwhile, my own Utopia still troubles me. Where,

where could I plant my little flag, with a moral certainty of being unmolested? Mr. Ruskin writes very confidently about what he will do in his little St. Georgia,—how he will educate the children, for example.* But let him read Section 73 of the Education Act—and then to parody Cloten, when he got up the serenade for Imogen,—“let him consider!” There will soon be not a corner of the earth in which you can carry on unmolested any social experiment, though it may be the most beneficent possible, and the very experiment upon which the whole future welfare of men may turn. In “Pippa passes” the lover declares he will depart to “some isle in the far seas, with the sea’s silence on it.” Even if he could now find such an island, some government or other would come and pick a quarrel with him and put him down, and “annex” him and his island. My own plan is this. I shall make somebody leave me a fortune. Or I shall get up a fund by means of shares. I shall then charter steam-vessels and go and dredge up an island somewhere in the utmost ocean. If any land *can* be a man’s own, that land would be mine; for I should, in engineering phrase, have “made” it. And there I shall set up my Utopia. But how about the governments who would want to put me down and annex my island? I have thought of that. I believe Dr. Dionysius Lardner invented a most awful engine of war, which was known by a very noisome name. It was capable of emitting such a stupendous stench that if it were set in action in—say Trafalgar Square—it would destroy all the lives in the metropolitan district; that is, within a radius of, I think, fifteen miles from Charing Cross. Now, I am going to invent—for purely defensive purposes, when I get to my island and set up my Utopia—an entirely new instrument of that description. Nobody but my *fidus Achates* and myself will know the secret of the invention; but I shall have torpedoes all round the island which will set it in action upon the lightest contact of a foreign keel. Nothing less would make me safe, even for a short breathing time from—how *shall* I phrase it for the eyes of Comtists?—from that portion of the Great Being which is outside of myself, and which I have never yet been able to worship. Of course, I shall take care that my invention rays out the destructive material only in one direction; and thus protected till some one finds out a countercheck, I and my poor little colony of half-a-dozen might chance to live a few years in peace, unmolested by the still remaining thousand million people till we had proved (on a wretched half-dozen souls) that our designs were really beneficent. I would then hand over the outcome to the magnanimous thousand million, and withdraw like Coriolanus—but no Volumnia should coax or command me back again into their magnanimous midst.

MATTHEW BROWNE.

* See *Fors Clavigera* for last August, p. 16.

SUPREME LOVE.

THIS is the sky, and thou art a star ;
The white moon is nigh, and this is the sky,
The bright clouds go by, and the world lies afar ;
This is the sky, and thou art a star !

How do I shine in thy love and thy bliss !
In thy lustre divine how I tremble and shine !
O my love, thou art mine ! I am lost while I kiss—
How do I shine in thy love and thy bliss !

Far under our feet, the world lessens to light :
How far and how sweet doth it gleam at our feet !
Around us how fleet shoot the stars of the night,
While under our feet the world lessens to light.

Stars fixed in the blue, and stars shooting to fall,
Stars lost in the dew of the strange silent blue,
I thrill through and through as I look on them all,—
Stars fixed in the blue, and stars shooting to fall.

So still, love, so deep, heaven closes us round :
The worlds shine in sleep, so still and so deep !
Still closer I creep, to thy heart, with no sound :
So still, love, so deep, heaven closes us round.

This is the sky, and thou art a star !
All bright things go by, for this is the sky.
Do we live ? must we die ? Is the world then so far ?
O this is the sky, and thou art a star !

JOHN BANES.

SNOBBERY AS A NATIONAL CHARACTERISTIC.

It is an accepted axiom that snobbery is an English specialty;—that a strongly-marked thread of the vice is inextricably interwoven in the woof of the national character;—that Britons, in short, though they may never, never be slaves, are, have been, and to all appearances ever, ever will be snobs.

Sundry other accusations have at different times been brought against us as a nation, in examining which there would be little interest, either because there is nothing specially characteristic in them, or because they are manifestly unjust, and have mostly been urged by those who do not at all understand us. But in this matter of snobbery, the accusation is made by ourselves; and there is undeniably such an amount of truth in it as to make a fair examination of the meaning of the charge, and the degree of justice with which it may be considered a national blot, not uninteresting.

What is meant by "snobbery" as a specially English vice? What is the idea in the minds of those who are continually complaining of this trait in English character? Of course, the mind of every reader at once recurs to Thackeray's immortal "Book of Snobs"—the great manual of the subject—the anti-snob's *vade-mecum*. You want to know what is meant by snobbery? Read Thackeray; and there you will see and understand to your heart's content. But I think that any one who wishes to estimate the amount of truth there is in the matter considered as a national characteristic, may well object to the theory and pictures of snobbery set forth in the great humorist's work. All the phases of character held up to scorn by the satirist may be legitimate objects of ridicule or aversion, but if they are all to be labelled as specifically snobs, the reader will find the definitive result to be, that every man is a snob who is not a perfect Christian and a perfect gentleman. The vigour of his arm has led the author to throw his net over too large a portion of the great subject of human failings. If there is any truth in the existence of snobbery as a British specialty—if there is any interest in examining the matter from the point of view which regards it as a distinctive trait of our national character, we must have a much more accurate and restricted definition of the meaning of the term snobbery.

What is it to be a snob?

Is the man who murders his father for that reason a snob? Surely not! A wretch, but not necessarily a snob.

Is the man who beats his wife a snob? Surely not on that account! He is an unmanly ruffian, but it does not follow that he is a snob.

Is the man who picks a pocket a snob? Surely it is a misuse of language to call him so on that ground. He is a scoundrel, but not necessarily a snob.

Is the man who habitually uses gross foul language a snob? Not necessarily for that reason. He is a blackguard, but it may be that he is not a snob.

Is the man who is wholly ignorant of and excluded from "good society" a snob? The ploughman at the plough's tail, the blacksmith at his anvil, the shopman behind his counter—are these men all snobs? Unquestionably there is no more reason for supposing that they must needs be such, than for supposing his Grace the Duke to be such.

Was the man who said to a certain concrete Duke, when he was left *tête-à-tête* with him in a railway-carriage after a third passenger had left the rail, who was, as he was informed, another nobleman of the same rank, "Lord! to think of his Grace talking all the time so haughtily to little snobs like you and me!" Was that man a snob? By no means, as far as the story goes, does it prove him to have been one. He misused the term, and was not upon that occasion a snob *because* he supposed, and supposing admitted, himself to be one.

Is the man who invites his friend to dinner, and gives him a scrag of mutton and a glass of twopenny ale, a snob? Not at all so. may be an honest, good fellow, or he may be a stingy curmudgeon; but there is in either case nothing snobbish in his proceeding.

But the man who invites his friend to dinner, and gives him a bottle of beastliness at twenty-four shillings the dozen, calling it the claret which Lord Nozoo always drinks;—is *he* a snob? Ay, verily is he!—a prince of snobs!

The man who stays in the town all the year because he can't afford to leave it; the man who stays because he is a miser, and won't afford to leave it; the man who *does* go holiday-making to amuse himself when he ought not to afford it;—are they snobs? Not a man of them is the real, genuine article. But the man who, being detained in town, pulls down his blinds, and lives in the back parlour, that he may be supposed to be away, he is a true and undeniable snob.

The man who does this or that, however objectionable his practice may be, and tells you that he does so because he likes it, and because he chooses to do it, is no snob. But the man who does this or that, and professes to like this or that, because "it is the right thing!"—because "it is all the go!" (horrid phrase!)—that man is a snob to the marrow of his bones.

Horace, who, despite his professional adulation of Augustus and

Mecænas, was a man of an essentially anti-snobbish nature, speaks of *imitatores* as *servum pecus*—the servile herd of imitators. Now this servile nature is quintessentially snobbish. Still it is needful to guard against misunderstanding. The man who imitates because it strikes him that what he has seen another do may be useful or pleasant to him, may be void of originality, but is not therefore a snob. The imitator whose imitation stamps him as a snob is the man who thinks that he will obtain the admiration of a third person by imitating somebody whom he conceives to be admired. He is the man who never dares to be and to appear himself—who distrusts his own qualifications so much that he is always anxious to present himself in the garb of some one else. He has at the very bottom of his heart so profound a contempt for himself, his own social position, and his own proper character, that he cannot venture to meet the eyes of his fellow-men, save under the disguise of assumed character, habits, ways, associations.

Jones the drysalter has so lowly an opinion of drysalting, and of himself as a professor of that craft, that he cannot endure that Brown the grocer should imagine that he, Jones, on the occasion of his excursion up the river on Sunday, was in the company only of drysalters and grocers like themselves. He must needs talk loudly of Captain Schwartzbein and Sir Spavin Hedger as having been members of the company on that festive occasion. And Jones, whom no amount of native vulgarity, nor even any want of probity in his drysaltering transactions, would have justified us in taxing with snobbery proper, stands confessed a proper snob.

It is needless to multiply such cases, as, of course, might be done to infinity. The diagnosis of true snobbery may be considered to have been made sufficiently clear—or at least, in the language of parliamentary draftsmen, of what shall be held to be snobbery for the purposes of this article.

Well, then, is snobbery, thus defined, a British specialty? It will hardly be doubted by those who, like Ulysses, have known the manners and the cities of many nations, that it must be admitted to be so.

And now let us see what this phenomenon means, considered as an outcome and manifestation of national character.

It is a remark as old as preachments about the golden mean, and "*medio tutissimus ibis*," that every vice is but the excess of a virtue. The failings, the follies, the meannesses of men are but the seamy side of qualities, often lovable, sometimes noble. Now, is not this snobbery so much reviled, so ridiculous always, so hateful sometimes, in truth the seamy side, the excess of a tendency to look up to, to admire, to reverence something or somebody else, as better, greater, grander, or more beautiful than ourselves? The simple, genuine, independent-minded man, estimating himself, his position, his worth,

at their true value, neither more nor less, will never be a snob. True ! But neither will the man whose self-conceit and vanity are such as to make it impossible for him to admire another more than himself. Ridiculous, odious he may be in twenty different ways, but he will never be a genuine snob.

Now, does this idea of the true quality and genesis of snobbery tally with other easily-recognisable specialities of English character ? Surely it does so tally. Surely it is true, that we are specially a people prone to look up to an ideal nobler than that which we consider to be incarnated in our individualities—a people capable of and with a tendency to reverence. That we are specially so, will not be doubted by those who are well acquainted with the idiosyncrasies of other nations—particularly those of the so-called Latin race. The pestilentially false notion that the true dignity of human nature is promoted by the universal acceptance of the doctrine that every man is equal to his fellow, has never found a congenial soil in this island. But it must be remembered that there are two ways in which this idea is apt to present itself to minds incapable of reverence. It is not only a habit of mind to think that, as it has been phrased, every man is as good as every other—and better ! But the thought often presents itself in the shape of, every man is as bad as every other—and worse ! Phases of national character would not be far to seek in which one of the most strongly marked and prominent characteristics is an incapacity for reverence—an ever-present tendency, not to exalt, to look up to, and to admire, but to pull down, to deny, and to depreciate—a tendency, not to such belief in excellence of any kind as would compel the believer in it to feel it to be better than what he sees in himself, but to disbelieve in all such superiority. And among these peoples there are no snobs. English people are often much struck by the absence of snobbery from the social relationships and manifestations of those peoples, and to be very sensible of the charm—for there *is* such a charm arising from the freedom from it. But if they would only consider what the qualities are by the loss of which this absence of snobbery is paid for, they would gladly compound for the disgust occasioned by the ridiculousness, the littleness, the absurdities, the meannesses of British snobbery !

Let us glance for an instant at the attitude of this snobbish British people during the period of trouble and anxiety through which the nation had recently to pass, while the life of the heir to the Crown was in danger. Most assuredly such a national attitude, such a manifestation of national sentiment—if, as is probable, it might be witnessed on a similar occasion among our Teuton kin—would be wholly out of the question among, and is almost inconceivable to, a people of Latin race. And we are often rated for the snobbery and “flunkysm” of our interest in, and regard for, royalty and all that surrounds it. No doubt we have all been showing our snobbery

upon the occasion that has so happily passed away! But has it not been the natural outcome of that phase of the national character which has been referred to—a capacity for reverence—a side of the national temperament, for the absence of which no other, or hardly any other, qualities could compensate? Let us be very sure that to look *up*, to be able to feel loyalty, to revere, is not ignoble, but is, on the contrary, so essential to nobleness of character, that no true nobility of national temper can exist where it is not. Happy would it be for some other nations, if it were possible for them to feel and to exhibit such a sentiment as that which has just been making itself manifest over the whole length and breadth of the British family!

May we never cease to be snobs at the cost of ceasing to be a reverential people! If we can hit the golden mean, and learn, all of us, to have the virtue without falling into the vice, so much the better, and the sooner the better! We shall reach that consummation some day. And in the meantime do not let us make too much of this matter of English snobbism, as one of the staves in that great chant of self-depreciation which has of late years been sung to so many tunes in England.

T. A. TROLLOPE.

THE BALLAD OF JUDAS ISCARIOT.

'Twas the body of Judas Iscariot
Lay in the Field of Blood;
'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Beside the body stood.

Black was the earth by night,
And blacker was the sky;
Black, black were the broken clouds,
Tho' the red moon went by.

'Twas the body of Judas Iscariot
Strangled and dead lay there;
'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Look'd on it in despair.

The breath of the world came and went
Like a sick man's in rest;
Drop by drop on the world's eyes
The dews fell cool and blest.

Then the soul of Judas Iscariot
Did make a gentle moan—
"I will bury underneath the ground
My flesh and blood and bone.

"I will bury deep beneath the soil,
Lest mortals look thereon,
And when the wolf and raven come
The body will be gone!

"The stones of the field are sharp as steel,
And hard and cold, God wot;
And I must bear my body hence
Until I find a spot!"

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot,
So grim, and wild, and gray,
Raised the body of Judas Iscariot,
And carried it away.

THE BALLAD OF JUDAS ISCARIOT.

And as he bare it from the field
Its touch was cold as ice,
And the ivory teeth within the jaw
Rattled aloud like dice.

As the soul of Judas Iscariot
Carried its load with pain,
The eye of heaven, like a lanthorn's eye,
Open'd and shut again.

Half he walk'd, and half he seemed
Lifted on the cold wind;
He did not turn, for chilly hands
Were pushing from behind.

The first place that he came unto
It was the open wold,
And underneath were prickly whins,
And a wind that blew so cold.

The next place that he came unto
It was a stagnant pool,
And when he threw the body in
It floated light as wool.

He drew the body on his back,
And it was dripping chill,
And the next place he came unto
Was a cross upon a hill.

A cross upon the windy hill,
And a cross on either side,
Three skeletons that swing thereon,
Who had been crucified.

And on the middle cross-bar sat
A white dove slumbering;
Dim it sat in the dim light,
With its head beneath its wing.

And underneath the middle cross
A grave yawn'd wide and vast,
But the soul of Judas Iscariot
Shiver'd, and glided past.

The fourth place that he came unto
It was the Brig of Dread,
And the great torrents rushing down
Were deep, and swift, and red.

He dared not fling the body in
For fear of faces dim,
And arms were waved in the wild water
To thrust it back to him,

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Turned from the Brig of Dread,
And the dreadful foam of the wild water
Had splashed the body red.

For days and nights he wandered on
Upon an open plain,
And the days went by like blinding mist,
And the nights like rushing rain.

For days and nights he wandered on,
All thro' the Wood of Woe ;
And the nights went by like moaning wind,
And the days like drifting snow.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Came with a weary face—
Alone, alone, and all alone,
Alone in a lonely place !

He wandered east, he wandered west,
And heard no human sound ;
For months and years, in grief and tears,
He wandered round and round.

For months and years, in grief and tears,
He walked the silent night ;
Then the soul of Judas Iscariot
Perceived a far-off light.

A far-off light that went and came,
Small as a glow-worm's e'e,
That came and went like the lighthouse gleam
On a black night at sea.

THE BALLAD OF JUDAS ISCARIOT.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Crawl'd to the distant gleam;
And the rain came down, and the rain was blown
Against him with a scream.

For days and nights he wandered on,
Push'd on by hands behind;
And the days went by like black, black rain,
And the nights like rushing wind.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot,
Strange, and sad, and tall,
Stood all alone at dead of night
Before a lighted hall.

And the wold without was white with snow,
And his foot-marks black and damp,
And the ghost of the silvern moon arose,
Holding her yellow lamp.

And the icicles were on the eaves,
And the walls were deep with white,
And the shadows of the guests within
Pass'd on the window light.

The shadows of the wedding guests
Did strangely come and go,
And the body of Judas Iscariot
Lay stretch'd along the snow.

The body of Judas Iscariot
Lay stretch'd along the snow;
'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Ran swiftly to and fro.

To and fro, and up and down,
He ran so swiftly there,
As round and round the frozen Pole
Glideth the lean white bear.

'Twas the Bridegroom sat at the table-head,
And the lights burnt bright and clear:
"Oh, who is that," the Bridegroom said,
"Whose weary feet I hear?"

'Twas one look'd from the lighted hall,
And answered soft and low,
"It is a wolf runs up and down
With a black track in the snow."

The Bridegroom in his robe of white
Sat at the table-head.
"Oh, who is that who moans without?"
The blessed Bridegroom said.

'Twas one looked from the lighted hall,
And answered fierce and low,
"'Tis the soul of Judas Iscariot
Gliding to and fro."

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Did hush itself and stand,
And saw the Bridegroom at the door
With a light in his hand.

The Bridegroom stood in the open door,
And he was clad in white,
And far within the Lord's Supper
Was spread so broad and bright.

The Bridegroom shaded his eyes and look'd,
And his face was bright to see.
"What dost thou here at the Lord's Supper
With thy body's sins?" said he.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Stood black, and sad, and bare.
"I have wandered many nights and days;
There is no light elsewhere."

'Twas the wedding guests cried out within,
And their eyes were fierce and bright—
"Scourge the soul of Judas Iscariot
Away into the night!"

The Bridegroom stood in the open door,
And he waved hands still and slow,
And the third time that he waved his hands
The air was thick with snow.

THE BALLAD OF JUDAS ISCARIOT.

And of every flake of falling snow,
Before it touched the ground,
There came a dove, and a thousand doves
Made sweet and gentle sound.

'Twas the body of Judas Iscariot
Floated away full fleet,
And the wings of the doves that bare it off
Were like its winding-sheet.

'Twas the Bridegroom stood at the open door,
And beckon'd, smiling sweet ;
'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Stole in, and fell at his feet.

"The Holy Supper is spread within,
And the many candles shine,
And I have waited long for thee
Before I poured the wine !"

The supper wine is poured at last,
The lights burn bright and fair,
Iscariot washes the Bridegroom's feet,
And dries them with his hair.

THE ART OF BEAUTY.

PART II.

PRACTICAL HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

It may not be superfluous now to say a few words on the decoration of rooms as affecting our personal appearance, and to offer a few modest hints upon wearing apparel itself, and the shapes and colours suitable to old and young, fat and thin, dark and fair, short and tall.

1st, as to Colour in Rooms.

Too much cannot be said against the pale, glossy, or white papers so much in fashion for drawing-rooms and boudoirs. I have already given reasons for this (see Jan. No., p. 83). They are ruination to any material, to any picture hung upon them, to any complexion. The same must be urged against white ceilings, and still more against white carpets. A pale carpet not only destroys everything in the room, but it visibly decreases the size of the room—pictures simply disappear. A light ceiling may pass unnoticed, since we have got out of the habit of ever looking upwards in a room, owing firstly to the glare, and secondly to the certainty of there being nothing to see; but a light floor cannot be forgotten. It forces itself on your attention whichever way you turn, casts up unpleasant reflected lights upon the polished legs of chairs, and destroys the colours and forms of all the furniture by its own obtrusiveness. Once, having purchased a curious carved cabinet of light oak, made in the sixteenth century, and brought it home to my white drawing-room, I experienced an unaccountable sense of disappointment on seeing it in its place. I found it only half the size I expected. I found the carving more trivial, the colour more dull—the whole thing an eyesore. I could not for a time understand how I had been deceived into spending money on it. I mourned over my empty purse, and decided, not without feeling rather small, on selling it again without boasting about it to my friends. About that time I conceived a plan of covering the walls of my drawing-room with some very dark tapestry which I possessed, and did so, just before my cabinet's destined departure. When all was done, behold, my eyes were opened—a sudden light flashed upon me! To my astonishment, against the darkened walls my cabinet once more became its former self. Never had I supposed that oak could "tell" against brown—but it did so; it rose in height, it spread in breadth, the colour brightened, and the carving seemed to be under

a spell—to move and live! I hardly recognised my lamented bargain now that it was going away. And then I saw at once that the whole thing was owing to the altered background; and I have waged eternal war against pale walls ever since.

To Mr. Owen Jones, Mr. Morris, Mr. Cottier, and a few other intelligent artists and architects, we owe a debt of gratitude. These gentlemen, especially Mr. Cottier, a pupil of Ruskin's, have lavished their great gift of an "eye" for form and colour in the direction of mural and room decoration—the stained glass, the ceilings, and stencils designed by them are quite perfect. The forms are studied and adapted from the finest examples in old Roman and Greek decoration, and their colours are all exquisite in themselves and exquisitely harmonised. Queer blues, that are neither blue, nor green, nor lilac; queerer greens and yellows, and all variations of tertiary tints, are tenderly united and mixed; at rare intervals a small bit of raw colour is introduced with peculiarly brilliant effect. Very little gold is employed; but what there is, is most craftily managed. Many colours are clouded or gradated in tint, in one pattern; black comes in well, or invisible greens or browns. The stencillings, though always effective, are never sufficiently so to kill the after furnishing of the apartment, or the people in it. The whole beauty is subservient to these, and arranged with a view rather to enhance and set off everything that is brought in contact with it, and especially human beings.

Let me entreat those who are about to redecorate their dwellings, if they do not make over to one of these artistic firms the entire responsibility of so arduous an undertaking, at least to study their works and rules, and follow them as far as they can. It is not more expensive to paint one's rooms with some warm tertiary colour, here and there stencilled with some standard pattern (procurable for a few pence at any decorator's) in a darker or lighter shade of the same colour, or an opposing colour, *not too vivid*, than to paper it with some shiny monstrosity; rather the reverse, it is a good deal cheaper. Neither is it more difficult to make a wall dark in colour half-way up, and the higher portion a delicate hue, the contrast united by a broad border, stencilled or in paper, combining both colours. It is not more expensive to have one's ceiling washed with a purple or any other soft-coloured wash, than to have three coats of white paint, and then varnish laid on it; and no one, understanding anything about art, will fail to see at once the superiority of the one effect to the other. Doors, too, should never stand out in staring contrast to the walls. The square form of a door is not a pretty one; and even a door with a rounded top, which is a much better form, is generally spoiled by not being carried up to the cornice. Doors should be tall, and should match in effect, if not in colour, the walls and ceiling—that is, a room with a deep blue ceiling and walls of Vandyke brown, and similar dark colours, may

have doors black, or deep sage green; a room whose walls and ceiling are chiefly coloured with the tertiary *citrine* (a mixture of orange and green—a yellowish colour), may have doors of a very dull green or brownish purple; a room papered with one of Morris's peculiar scarlet papers, deeply indented, may have black or sage-green doors and wainscot. Doors may with good effect be touched slightly with gold, or with paler shades of their own colour, or painted in the panels with devices, according to the owner's taste.

There is no more perfect background than the old Spanish leather of the sixteenth or seventeenth century; but as this is hard to procure and of great price—nearly £5 per yard, at the least—the modern imitations in paper do as well for all practical purposes. They are copies of the finest antique patterns and colours, and a wall covered partly with these and with some cheaper plain colour above, and a ceiling of any colour but white—will always be a beautiful room and a becoming room to any person who is wise enough to enter it.

These are very rough and bare hints, but it would take too much space to describe half the complications of colour and shape, which may be better understood by looking at a room decorated in any of the above styles.

LIGHTING AND FURNISHING.

It is important to consider, when decorating a room, by what light its decorations are to be seen. Colours which combine sweetly by day, are sometimes inharmonious by candle-light, and of course any room that is to be used only in the evening should be decorated by the same light. For instance, some blues become green by candle-light, and some do not; a combination of a certain shade of Magenta and Turkey red, which by daylight are a powerful contrast (not that it is one I could recommend), by candle-light would cease to exist, as they become one tint; and certain yellow-pinks and blue-pinks, which by daylight are most discordant, match at night. Also, some colours require more, some less, light than others to look well.

There are two things that should be remembered in lighting an apartment:—1st, candles give a far *pleasanter* light than gas, if they are in sufficient numbers to illuminate the room: 2nd, the light should never come from several places at once, in equal proportions, so as to perplex the shadows of things. Light that comes from *above*, as nearly as possible like sunlight, is preferable; the corners of a room should always be light *enough*, but not so light as to destroy the principal light, wherever that is placed. Thus:—a face that catches two equally strong lights at once, so as to be without shadow, never looks its best, and a dress, or a wall, suffers in exactly the same proportion. It is a great mistake to make a room

too light, as many rooms are made which have numerous gas-branches. Too much gas-light exposes wrinkles and lines which the kinder sun forgets; the strong light from below which illuminates the stage at a theatre is *only* tolerable with the equally strong light from above, because the actors are at a distance, and in no otherwise could their faces be sufficiently visible.

By day, a skylight, not too expansive, is a good light for a room, or tall windows at one side only; and in artificial lighting the same principle should be observed. If a chandelier is used, other lights must be subservient to it. If gas-branches, those at one end of the room, at least, should be shaded, so that they may give light without glare, and assist instead of destroying the shadows of the rooms. The extremely good effect of *shaded* gas jets or lamps is very little recognised in modern rooms.

To return to our walls. A dark crimson wall, especially in flock, fine as the effect is, is not to be recommended for any evening room, as it is so difficult to light. Scarlet lights well; but crimson absorbs light to such an extent that hardly any amount of candles, lamps, and gas jets, are able to make the room properly clear. I can only tell my readers that flock paper is a splendid foundation for a painted wall, as it then has the effect of a wall stamped or indented, and not papered. A red room, with a black ceiling starred with dull sea-green or yellow, is very bright and good. Any drawings, or pictures, or furniture against scarlet or pale red walls, are wonderfully set off, either by night or day. A room painted with murrey colour, a kind of dull light lilac, warmed up with amber hangings, may also have a very delicate and beautiful effect.

Let me also warn my patient readers against grained painting. This is a very odious fashion, which we may suppose came in for cheapness' sake. But let me entreat the introduction of real woods: there are many inexpensive ones, and the markings in them are inexpressibly lovely. Even plain deal, stained with some semi-transparent varnish (this is much used in ecclesiastical decoration nowadays), is a very clean, durable, and beautiful ornament for walls, floors, and ceilings.

Now let me say a word about carpets. Pale ones I ignore; they do not exist for me. But the patterns and the colours even of the dark ones! What is to be done with a room whose carpet is grass-green, with large red spots or big flowers on it? What is to be done with any "cheerful" patterned carpet? Nothing—but to part with it to some member of that tribe whose armorial bearings are the Three Hats. Have we not seen the Royal Academy's walls defaced by artists who *will* place their sitters on some such carpet, and then paint the horror that they see? Has not that been a warning to us? It is a good test to apply to one's furniture as to one's dress, "Would it look well in a picture?" Reader, if you wish to buy modern

carpets, buy some moss pattern, or something very dark and neat, else you will never make your drawing-room other than a grief of heart to any cultivated person who may come into it.

But my advice on the whole is—send away all your carpets, get a quantity of the common rough matting for your rooms, and lay on it at intervals one of the rugs made by the Orientals. Turkish, Moorish, Indian, or African carpets, especially the antique make, will never fail to look right, for they are the most perfect in colour and design that can be procured.

For curtains and coverings get whatever stuff you like. Chintz or velvet are always good. In patterns, be wary. Patterns suitable for a hanging are not always suitable for a chair seat. For instance, to be sitting on a bird or a butterfly is an unpleasant sensation; a vase of flowers on a curtain is absurd. Italian patterns are usually debased. Stout boys standing upon scarfs attached to boughs in an impossible manner—swans perched on twigs of plants that never could support their weight—butterflies rather bigger than the storks beside them—are bad, because ridiculous; they hurt our sense of propriety, and worry the eye. Choose good patterns—common sense will guide you—and let your hangings be equal in tone with that of your walls.

And now I will close with a few rules for colour, which I think will be found equally applicable to dress and to furniture.

Consider, when choosing a colour for any purpose, where it will have to be seen, in what quantity and in what substance. If you are going to paint a ceiling with it, choose a tint lighter than you mean it to appear; for a ceiling is always in shade, and a very dark colour will be in that position hardly distinguishable from black. If you mean to veil it with white, choose a brighter, deeper tint than that of the unveiled trimmings which you may intend for it, as it will otherwise not match them. If for dress or furniture, consider the material—a yellow which looks gorgeous in satin is detestable in cloth; a pale tint which in flannel would look like dirty white, may in a rich silk or fine cashmere have the most elegant effect. Never put green and red of equal intensity in juxtaposition; although these are complementary colours, there is no more disagreeable mixture. A pale dull sea-green goes admirably with a rich crimson or Indian red; a pale dull red with deep green—but they *must* always be of very different intensity to look well together, and are always difficult to mingle pleasantly. Turquoise, the antique yellow-blue, mixes very sweetly with a pale green; ultramarine, being a red blue, almost lilac in the shadows, is horrible with green. Pure pale yellow is a very becoming colour, and will harmonise with purple; with blue the contrast is too coarse.

COLOURS.

Of course every colour can be made beautiful and becoming to the face by being cunningly arranged and relieved. It may always be done by mixing it *into* another colour. You may select a colour which partakes of another, *i.e.*, is not too pure—even a shot colour—many shots are most beautiful—or you may put other colours with it. Do not place blue and yellow together in pure colours; let the blue be a pale yellow-blue. Do not place orange and yellow near together, unless they are *intentionally* mingled in one mass; and it requires some skill to do this well.

The best way is to look at models of colouring. Stothard had a collection of butterflies, which taught him many things about the mixtures and contrasts of colours. Or go to the flowers. You can have no better tutors; all the books on art and manuals of colour will never teach as well as they.

In a flower containing strong contrasts, such as purple and white, *e.g.*, you will generally find a third tint placed between the two, in however small a quantity. A warm colour usually divides two cold colours, or a cold colour two warm ones, or the two are *mingled into* a third tint at the junction. For instance, see this tulip, whose petals half-way down are of the brightest red and the base of the calyx white; these colours are softened into one another by a streak of purest ultramarine, and so perfect is this combination that one can conceive nothing beyond it. See this sweet-william blossom—the centre white, or nearly, the edges darkest crimson. There is no blue between them, but the uniting colour is *pink*. You can distinctly trace the narrow band of blue-pink, which takes away all hardness from the junction. Orange is mixed into white with pale yellow, or pink, or green veins.

Blue flowers seldom lack a touch of warmer colour—lilac, pink, or yellow—to relieve their coldness; white ones are softened with yellow, greenish, or pinkish shadows or veins. In fact, as a result of the mingling of many hues into each other for a perfect whole, I am very doubtful whether every flower has not in it *every* colour—secondaries as well as primaries; and probably, were our sight but clear enough to distinguish them, even the tertiaries, and the twenty tones of intensity belonging to each. In many flowers we may see the gradations; in others we may guess at them; but our sight, even with the aid of microscopes, is very limited.

What an eye for colour has Mother Nature! Does she not plant white roses in a dark mould? does she not set her blossoms in leaves of just that subtle hue which will set them off to the greatest advantage? When her skies are grey, does she not stretch a brown network of boughs across them? If she has a bright object, does she not set it in the sun, and never fail to cast behind it a shadow

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that shall throw it up? She does her best even with our white walls. If you see a face against any pale wall where the sun strikes one side of it, the background will always look darker than it is on the bright side, and lighter than it is on the dark side. That is Mother Nature helping us out of our ugliness.

FORM.

When you have got your background right, you will soon see what forms to put against it, what are most beautiful in themselves, and what most suitable to it. Even the legs of a chair may be "good" or "bad;" carving and fretwork may be either pure in curve, graceful—what Ruskin speaks of as "temperate,"—or it may be exaggerated, contorted, unmeaning, and corrupt. Even the folds of hangings may be stately or the reverse; but when the colour is all right, these things will mostly right themselves.

As for shapes of dresses, a good way of testing the beauty of form is by drawing the outline of a dress, and looking at it from all points of view, and with half-closed eyes. This test, applied to that form of gown which has been so long in vogue—the long, pinched waist, and the unnatural width of the hips, low neck, and no sleeves—proves the extreme ugliness of it. Observe the sketch. This gown, in outline, simply looks like a very ill-shaped wineglass upside down. The wide crinoline entirely conceals any natural grace of attitude; the horizontal line across the neck invariably decreases height, and the want of sleeves is a painful want to an artistic eye. Few women's arms are beautiful above the elbow; fatness is not correctness of outline, as some seem to think. We are not like the Greeks, who made the improvement of the body their dearest study; and, not having reduced our superfluous fat, and cultivated our muscles into perfection, we ought to be careful how we expose them. A dress, high behind or on the shoulders, gives the whole height of the figure, and full sleeves are an improvement to every figure but a very stout one, just as the fashion of wearing the hair full and loose is more becoming to the face than that which scrapes it all back out of sight. The best way to decide on a really beautiful dress is by studying the pictures of the old masters, and copying them—Vandyke, Lely, Watteau, Gainsborough, Reynolds, or Lawrence.



SUITABLE DRESSES.

As for dresses suitable to certain persons, I need say but little. There are many books on the etiquette of dress, showing what is

proper to be worn in the morning and in the evening and at noonday. A few very simple rules will suffice here. Those who are very stout should wear nothing but black; those who are very thin should put a little padding in their gowns; and neither should be in the least *décolletée*. Perpendicular stripes in dresses give height, and increase fulness, and are therefore particularly suited to very slight, small people, and particularly unfitted for stout figures. To fair persons blue is becoming—but not every blue. Dark blue, or too brilliant a blue, is extremely unbecoming to that kind of complexion, and makes the skin yellow and the hair sandy. It is the old, pale, dull blue that really makes sand gold. Pink, especially the old-fashioned yellow pink, is, when not too brilliant, becoming to all complexions except that which goes with red hair. Light green may be safely worn by the very dark, the very rosy, and by the very pale when the skin is extremely clear; but to ordinary English faces it is a trying colour, though there are people who look well in nothing else. Green, mixed properly with pale blue, is very becoming indeed. Grey is the most beautiful colour for old and young—I mean the soft silver grey which is formed by equal parts of black and white, with no touch of mauve in it. It admits of any colour in trimming, and throws up the bloom of the skin. Rose-colour, for some people, is pretty, and not unbecoming. White, so disastrous to rooms, is generally becoming in dress—only very coarse complexions are spoilt by it.

Short women should never wear double skirts or tunics—they decrease the height so much; unless, indeed, the tunic is very short, and the skirt very long. So also do large, sprawling patterns used for trimmings. Let these be left to women tall enough to carry them off. Neither let a very little woman wear her hair half down her back; let her lift it clean up as high as possible.

Large feet should never be cased in kid—least of all, white kid slippers—for kid reveals so clearly the form and movements of the feet, and stretches so easily, that few feet have a chance in them. Black stockings and shoes, even for evening wear, are the most appropriate choice.

SHAM DELICACY.

And now I have somewhat to say which, in all probability, will offend the prejudices of some people. I mean, in advocating the use, *by those who need it*, of almost any cosmetics not injurious to health.

Possibly because paint is considered to be a characteristic of a class of persons who have no other purpose in life than to look attractive, and whom we cannot wish to imitate, an unnecessary amount of contempt and contumely has been cast on cosmetics. It seems to us that (apart from the risk of injuring the cuticle of the skin, the usual

result of opaque and bad pastes and powders) there is not any more harm or degradation in avowedly hiding defects of complexion, or touching the face with pink or white, than in padding the dress, piercing the ears, or replacing a lost tooth; nor can half the objections be urged against this practice that can be urged against that of wearing false hair. It seems to me generally a harmless, and, in some cases, a most necessary and decent practice. There are numberless girls who are most amiable, and who would be almost pretty, perhaps quite so, if they were not afflicted with thoroughly bad complexions. Some by nature, some through a peculiarity of health, are martyrs to pimples and other eruptions which might be considerably disguised; some have been ruined by smallpox, by fire—indeed, every one knows cases of the kind, where the use of cosmetics would be a real kindness to the victim's friends. But these girls, though any other personal improvement, such as padding or false teeth, is quite allowable in their eyes, have been educated in a righteous horror of "paint," and talk with a flourish about the superiority of "honesty," as they call it. Indeed, they *are* honest, where they can least afford to be so, and with the unpleasant result of disgusting their friends. But they are *not* thoroughly honest—unhappily, both in their honesty and dishonesty they are equally unwise and culpable. Let them take off that ridiculous bustle, and put a little harmless powder over that unsightly red scar on the cheek; let them let out their poor wasp-like waists to something like a sane circumference, and just evaporate with one tiny touch of white the horrid red spot on their nose. It seems to me an inexpressibly absurd and inconsistent "crack" of modern middle-class society, that if an honest girl is known to use a *soupeon* of colour or tinted powder, she is sneered at and laughed at by her virtuous female friends, and so she yields; but let me remind her that she is also laughed at if she has great feet, or scarcely any hair, or thick fingers, or any other defect. Crows will always persecute their weaker brethren. There are always crows in every company; and if your mistaken "honesty" forbids you to conceal or improve your bad skin, these benevolent fowls will none the less set upon you with their stinging beaks and hoarse screams. Your honesty will only be another feather to wing the shafts of such enemies; you will not save yourself, but you will succeed in annoying society. If a woman have the misfortune to lose a conspicuous tooth, it is worse than folly not to replace it by art, rather than force upon every one who speaks to her the extremely unpleasant appearance of her tongue through the gap. If a girl has the trial of a complexion so bad that the sight of it gives one a turn, it is simply a duty for her either not to go into society at all, or, if she does, to conceal it as she would not scruple to conceal lameness or leanness. You have no right to inflict your misfortune on everybody—it is an unpardonable offence against good taste. You can't

alter your great feet ; but who will blame you for wearing well-made boots ? You can't help losing your teeth ; but who will quarrel with you for wearing false ones ? You cannot make your thin hair thick ; but who will decline your acquaintance because you intermingle an artificial plait or two ? Yet, a few years ago, false teeth and false hair were among the most proscribed of proscribed enormities ; while now every one sensibly approves the former, and every girl carries a Christian's-burden of the latter, and openly avows it. I blame some of them—I do not blame all. It is needless for a woman who has plenty of natural hair to add false hair to it ; and if carried to a very fashionable extent, the impossible plaits and cables become a folly on a young head ; but I do not blame them altogether, for it is better they should study their appearance badly than not study it at all ; and when England nurtures a more cultivated and intelligent race, these monstrosities of fashion will grow beautifully less.

Lastly, let us have moderation and good taste. If an emaciated woman pad her dress, she must not overdo it, or pad it in the wrong place—that outrages nature more than if she left it alone. If a woman powder or paint, she must not smear her face carelessly with unnatural tints, like a clown in a pantomime. I should never recommend unguents injurious or dangerous—belladonna for the eyes, for instance, which, after a time, destroys the sight and in most cases is used so clumsily that the effect is exceedingly bad. There are transparent cosmetics which leave the pores open whilst they tint the skin, and will bear safe contact with soap and water. I should strenuously enjoin the wise use of those which are quite compatible with health and cleanliness. A woman who ruins her fine head of dark hair in making it yellow to follow the fashion is a fool ; but if she does not injure it by the process, and she prefers to wear it yellow, it is nobody's business to criticise her. Let them leave her alone, and be more wise themselves.

O women ! do not pretend you are indifferent to your own charms : it is not true, and were it true, it would be a disastrous blunder. Remember that others are not indifferent to you. A beautiful woman is a joy even to her own sex. Beauty is so precious in the eyes of women that they never fail to appreciate it even in rivals, unless they themselves happen to be ugly, in which case envy must have a tendency to make them spiteful—not through real ill-nature, but more from natural impulse ; not even consciously very often, but inevitably. A woman is naturally jealous of her rival ; but when that which to her affectionate soul is dearer than life itself—and which begets her love of beauty—affection, is not compromised, she will always do justice to her sisters. Goldsmith put a true sentiment into the mouth of Emma Hardcastle, "The next best thing to being pretty one's self, is to have pretty relations," and a pretty face is such a delight to the eye that it ought surely to be prized and cultivated.

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But cultivate it wisely. Women have no right to injure their health in order to enhance their beauty.

A lady who squeezes her waist into ten inches, endangers her life in order to become a disgusting object; she provokes the horrified query—"Where are her lungs, and her other internal organs?" She ought to be excluded from the company of all æsthetic and sensible-minded people till she sees her folly. The same must be said of a girl who wears heels so lofty that she cannot walk without the support of an umbrella, and whose features are actually drawn with pain.

I long for the time when some acknowledged censor will insist upon the laws of propriety and beauty being observed throughout the fashionable world, who will absolutely forbid the emaciated to exhibit their bones like anatomical models; who will sternly command those who are obese beyond all limits to wear nothing but black, decently made; who will forbid the heated dreams of overworked dressmakers to disclose themselves in gigantic patterns on human drapery; who will then perhaps even commence a raid against the obstinacy which clothes our men in swallow-tails, straight trousers, shirt collars, and "anguish pipes."

M. E. H.

TO "LYDIA LANGUISH."

I.

You ask me, Lydia, "whether I,
If you refuse my suit, shall die."
 (Now pray don't be offended);
Although the time be out of joint,
I should not to a bodkin's point
 Resort, at once, to mend it;
Nor, if your doubtful mood endure,
Attempt a final Water-cure
 Except against my wishes;
For I respectfully decline
To dignify the Serpentine
 And make *hors-d'œuvres* for fishes.
But, if you ask me whether I
 Composedly can go,
Without a look, without a sigh,
Why, then I answer—No.

II.

"You are assured," you sadly say
(If in this most considerate way
 To treat my suit your will is),
That I shall "quickly find as fair
Some new Neera's tangled hair—
 Some easier Amaryllis."
I cannot promise to be cold
If smiles are kind as yours of old
 On lips of later beauties;
Nor can I hope to quite forget
The homage that is Nature's debt,
 While man has social duties;
But, if you ask, do I prefer
 To you I honour so
This highly hypothetical Her,
I answer plainly—No.

III.

You fear, you frankly add, "to find
In me too late the altered mind
That altering Time estranges."
To this I make response that we,
As physiologists agree,
Must have septennial changes;
This is a thing beyond control,
And it were best upon the whole
To try and find out whether
We could not, by some means, arrange
This not-to-be-avoided change
So as to change together:
But, had you asked me to allow
That you could ever grow
Less amiable than you are now,—
Emphatically—No.

IV.

But—to be serious—if you care
To know how I shall really bear
This much-discussed rejection,
I answer you. As feeling men
Behave, in best romances, when
You outrage their affection;
With all the ecstasy of woe,
By which, as melodramas show,
Despair is simulated;
Enforced by all the watery grief
Which hugest pocket-handkerchief
Has ever indicated;
And when, arrived so far, you say
In tragic accents "Go,"
Then, Lydia, then—I still shall stay,
And firmly answer—No.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

OFF THE SKELLIGS.

By JEAN INGELOW.

CHAPTER IV.

"Up and down as dull as grammar,
On an eve of holiday."

MRS. BROWNING.

"He says 'It's not the slightest use to wake them, my dear; they'll neither understand the matter nor feel it.' So with that he kissed them—asleep, you know, in those two beds—and off he went."

These words were spoken by my nurse one evening as she sat at her tea with a friend whom she had invited to spend the evening with her.

"And took your mistress and the little boy with him, didn't he?" said the friend.

"Yes, and they are coming back to-morrow."

"And how long is Mr. Graham to be away?"

"Nobody knows—it's Sydney that he's gone to—they went to see him sail."

"And you mean to go with her to the out-of-the-way place you told me of?"

"Yes; but how missis can put her head into such a hole I can't think. I'd as lief stop here and never see a soul as go there, where they'll live just as if they weren't gentlefolks."

"Maybe you'll find it better than you expect," observed the friend.

"I don't see how that can be," replied nurse; "missis has explained it all to me. 'I should wish, nurse,' says she, 'that there should be no misunderstanding between us. You wish to remain in my service?' 'If you please, ma'am,' says I. Says she again, 'Do you know what sort of a house I am going to?' 'No, ma'am,' says I; 'but I don't need to know, for I shall not have to clean it.'"

"You were right there," said the friend; "and of course she won't expect any cleaning of you."

Nurse proceeded—"I suppose," says missis, 'you know that your master has had losses;' and then on she went, and told me that he was obliged to leave her in England, and that she had a small property of her own, which was two acres of land and a windmill. These were almost in the midst of a common, and the mill was let, to a very respectable couple. On the land she said were two cottages, such as poor folks live in. 'You need make no mistake,' says she, 'about them; they have brick floors, and the door opens into the

front kitchen of each. One of those front kitchens I mean to have for my parlour, the other will be the nursery. There are two little back kitchens behind, where the cooking and all that must be done; and there are four little attics above, where we must sleep. Those cottages,' she says, 'will not let, because they are in such a lonesome place, therefore the best thing I can do is to live in them, and the garden ground will provide fruit and vegetables.'"

"I would not have gone with her," said the friend.

"She is a very nice lady to live with," urged our nurse.

"But she is a very out-of-the-way person," continued the friend.

"Oh, I don't care for that," said nurse, "so long as she never interferes with me; besides, she allows a great deal of liberty, and never troubles herself to look after things, but just lies on the sofa reading her books, and writing—no wonder she has the headache."

"But they do say she gets money by writing," remarked the friend.

My nurse shook her head.

"Nobody would buy such ridiculous things," she replied, "as missis covers her paper with. I've often seen them—they are rounds, and squares, and triangles, all going in and out of one another. John—that was our footman before they lost their property—said they were Mathewmatics."

I cannot say that I distinctly regretted this intended absence of my father. A week is a long time to a little child, and ten miles is a great distance—a much longer time and a much greater distance I did not picture clearly to myself; besides, the absence of my brother induced me to play with my little sister Amy, and in that natural and healthy companionship I found consolation for the want both of parents and expeditions to the minster.

In the course of time my mother and Snap came home. Very soon there was a great deal of noise and confusion in the house: furniture was sold, and other furniture packed up; till one day, as I was looking out of the window, I saw a fly standing at the door, and my mother coming up to me, kissed me, and told me to look at my old nursery, and then at the minster, for most likely I should never see them any more.

Mr. Mompesson was present. I asked if I should never see him any more. He said he could not tell. This inclined me to cry, but Snap laughing at me and saying that it would be very jolly to live in the country, I was cheered; and Mompey having kissed me lovingly, we got into the fly, and began a journey which lasted all day.

It was late in April. The fields were full of buttercups, and the hawthorn was in bud. Snap, as I remember, was in high spirits, but my mother sometimes shed tears. She was generally a silent person, but that day she made many efforts to talk, and towards

evening her spirits rose, and we beheld the place that nurse had called "a hole."

A most lovely and desirable place we thought it. Two cottages built together, and thatched, standing on a great green common, which in front stretched away for miles, and was studded with little hillocks covered with broom. This was what met our eyes, and we were delighted. The little hillocks were golden with broom blossom, and here and there was green heather, or stunted hawthorn trees, and patches of wild flowers.

At the back was an orchard and a vegetable garden, also the mill with the miller's cottage, and the miller's large duck-pond and cow-shed, and beyond these was the common again; not a single object to be seen on its green expanse, and no variety of colour but what was supplied by the winding sandy road that crossed it in the direction of the nearest town. Inside, the cottages did not communicate. In the one on the left was the little parlour; it had a round table in it, mamma's sofa and chairs, and a good-sized set of book-shelves. It had also a piece of old turkey carpet on the floor. In the little room over it, mamma slept with Amy; in the attic at the back stood Snap's bed, and I had the corresponding attic in the other house. Though we had come from a handsome and well-appointed house, I do not think that these arrangements struck us as at all shabby or uncomfortable, and in some respects we were far happier than before, for we perceived that we should now enjoy the sweets of liberty. A young servant had been hired to help nurse, and these between them conducted the household with little or no interference from my mother. But we did not now take regular walks as heretofore; we might wander where we liked in perfect safety—nurse could not spare the time to go with us, nor was there any need for surveillance. Excepting on market day, not a cart jogged and not a farmer plodded along the sandy road; but on that day the miller's wife, Mrs. Sampson, put on her best print gown, and came out to chat with stray passers-by; our nurse and her assistant also wore their best ribbons then, and gossiped over the low garden-hedge; for from Monday morning early to Friday evening late they never saw a soul, and if Saturday happened to be wet, sore were their lamentations. My mother used to lie on her sofa and read, or sit at her desk writing almost all day; but she superintended our lessons for a short time in the morning, and sometimes, as a rare pleasure for us, she would take a ramble with us on the common. We had now reached an age when she seemed to think it a needless and useless attempt to keep us in ignorance any longer, and she generally answered our questions fully and as clearly as she could. I say *our* questions, not that any were originated by me, but that I participated, as far as I could understand them, in all Snap's speculations, doubts, and wonders. We, however, led a much more healthy life than had hitherto been

the case. We dined at twelve, and after that we might ramble out till hunger brought us home to our evening meal; thus from one o'clock till seven we often ran about or sat playing among the purple and gold flowers, the grey lichens and the white camomiles. For some time after we reached that pleasant home, we were exceedingly happy, though we had our difficulties and perplexities, for after a while we became engaged in the somewhat arduous task of constructing an entirely new language, grammar, spelling, and all. It was of course my brother's idea to make this language, and when I had been taken into partnership I helped as well as I could.

The verbs of our language were to be all regular, and, to save trouble, Snap decreed that there should be only two conjugations.

The great present convenience of the language was to be the impossibility of its being understood by others when we spoke it, but our humble ambition was that at some future day it would, or at least might, become the universal language of mankind. Indeed, after we had spent many months in contriving it, we thought it would be a shame if it did not; but as we had often been told of the difficulty experienced by foreigners in pronouncing the "th," we decided on omitting this sound, to make them more willing to learn it. We agreed very happily about the language itself, but were always wrangling about the spelling. The misery caused by the sounds of the vowels never shall I forget; we had intended to have only five, but were at last obliged to increase these sounds to eleven.

Some of Snap's original poems and my first journal are written in this language; and we were deep in the labour of its construction when our mother discovered the fact, and was not at all elated, but, on the contrary, exceedingly annoyed, though we took great pains to explain its merits to her.

Perhaps it was to prevent the activity of our minds from being entirely wasted in wrong directions, that about this time she engaged a tutor for us, being, as she explained to Snap, unable to give her time to his education, as she had so much writing to do. She took great pains to impress upon us that we were to be very obedient and obliging to our new tutor, and very attentive to his lessons. He was to sleep at the miller's house, and our little nursery was to be furnished up as a school-room.

In due time the tutor made his appearance. He came in with sufficient assurance; he heard us read—we lisped horribly; he saw us write—our writing was dreadful. He seemed a good youth enough. That he was very young was evident; we had been told that he had just left King's College, London, so we treated him with great deference, and whatsoever he did we admired. Thus, when he whistled while mending our pens, and when he cut his initials on the wooden desk, we thought these acts proofs of superiority. He, however, did not seem as well pleased with us, for he

had encouraged us to talk that he might discover what we knew, and he shortly began to look hot, uncomfortable, and perplexed. Finally, he remarked that it was time to "shut up shop," asked if there were any rabbits on the common, and affably decreed that we might come out with him and show him about.

Off we all set, first to the mill for a dog, then to the heath, when, finding our new friend gracious and friendly, we shortly began to chatter and explain various things to him and to argue with each other.

At last we sat down. Our tutor sunk into silence, whistled softly, and stared from one of us to the other. Snap, in the joy of his heart, was describing our new language, and—oh, audacious act!—was actually asking him whether he would like to learn it.

Not a word did he say, but a sort of alarm began to show itself in his face; and at length, at the end of a sharp argument between us, he started up and exclaimed—

"I say! there's something wrong here—a child of six, and talk about a strong preterite! good gracious!"

"So I tell her," said Snap; "she ought to know better than to expect all our verbs to have strong preterites."

"Come home, young ones," said our tutor.

We rose, and he set off at a steady pace; we sneaked behind, aware that something was wrong. We wondered why he went so fast, for he was evidently tired, and often wiped his forehead with his handkerchief. At the cottage-door he met my mother.

"I hope you have had a pleasant walk," she said.

"Oh yes, thank you—at least—not exactly. It's—it's not exactly what I expected."

"You can go into the orchard, children, and play there," said my mother, and she and our new tutor went in and had a long conversation together.

When we next met him, which was after tea, he appeared very ill at ease, and Snap, who since our walk had become quite at home with him, asked him a great many questions, which related chiefly, as I remember, to ghosts, spirits, the magnetic poles, and other every-day matters. Finally, observing his discomfort, we proposed to do some *Shakespeare* for him, and he sat staring at us under this infliction till nurse called us away to bed.

The next morning at breakfast our mother gave us a lecture respecting our general behaviour and the manner in which we talked. We had very much surprised our new tutor, she said, and we were not to act scenes before him any more, or he would certainly be displeased.

In the midst of the meal, Mr. Sampson, the miller, appeared at the open door, looking flushed and excited.

"New tooter's off, ma'am," said he; "I said he wouldn't stop."

"Off!" repeated my mother.

"Yes, ma'am, gone—run away," replied the miller.

"Extraordinary! run away, Mr. Sampson! what can you mean?"

"Yes, ma'am. I said to my wife last night, 'That young chap won't stay. I know it by the look of him.' And sure enough this morning, just after I went to the mill, he dropped himself and his bag out o' window, and off he ran. When I came in just now, my wife said, 'He's off, John; the tooter has run away.'"

"Have you any reason to think he was not satisfied with his accommodation?" asked my mother.

The miller shook his head. "No, ma'am; but we heard him muttering to himself last night. 'I can stand a good deal,' said the tooter, 'but I can't stand a strong ——,' we could not hear the last word, though he said it over several times."

"Strong butter?" suggested nurse, who had brought in some cress, and was listening to the recital with interest.

"No, it wasn't butter, I know," replied the honest miller.

"And it couldn't well be beer," said nurse, "for I'm sure our beer is as weak as water."

Here nurse and Mr. Sampson retired, and my mother seemed to be lost in thought.

Half an hour after, when nurse came in again to clear away the breakfast things, my mother said—

"It is very strange that this young man should have disappeared in such a hurry."

Nurse said nothing, but she looked wise.

"What do you consider the reason to have been?" said my mother, point-blank.

"Why, really, ma'am, the children do say such strange things, and they look so queer, bless 'em, and their play-actings are so awful-like, that I do assure you I should often be uneasy in my mind with them myself if I had not been used to them so long."

"You cannot believe that this young man was afraid of them," said my mother.

"Perhaps he thought it would save trouble to run off and have done with it," said nurse, glancing aside from the question.

"I really do not know what is to be done," remarked my mother.

"Well, ma'am," answered nurse, coming to the rescue with some practical suggestions, "the children might have their hair cut; and perhaps you could send to the town for some pomatum, for Master Graham's hair sticks out just like tow; that would make them look better. And then they might be particular forbid," she continued, glancing at us with a severe *regard of control*,—"particular forbid to talk their gibberish language, or act their Hamlets and their other spirits, or ask the next gentleman any outlandish questions that nobody that ever lived can answer, till he gets used to them."

"Next market-day Mr. Sampson had better be asked to bring some pomatum," replied my mother.

"Thank you, ma'am; and I could cut missy's hair short myself if I might; it will be quite ruined by the time she is grown up if she wears it now so long and rough."

My mother had already taken up her book.

"Well, nurse, just as you like," said she.

No steps were taken on that day, but there was a long consultation between nurse and Mrs. Sampson; and when, one week after, mamma announced that she had engaged another tutor, our hair was all cropped short under their joint superintendence in Mrs. Sampson's kitchen. A quantity of pomatum was next rubbed into it, and if we did not then look like other children, as they flattered themselves, we certainly looked very different from our former selves. Our mother and nurse did not take much trouble to inform us beforehand of what was going to happen. We heard one day at breakfast that the new tutor was coming at ten o'clock, and nurse occupied herself for a long while over my toilet and Snap's, shaking her head over my hands, and lamenting that they were as brown as berries.

Enter new tutor, introduced by my mother,—a tall, cheerful young man, followed by two dogs. His countenance expressed great amusement, and when mamma had retired, he looked at us both with considerable attention, while his dogs lay panting at his feet with their tongues out.

As for me, I was dreadfully abashed, and felt myself to be a kind of impostor, who must carefully conceal what I was, or the new tutor might run away.

"Come here," said the new tutor to Snap, "and let the little fellow come too. Oh, she's a girl, I remember. Well, come here both of you, and let me see what you are like. You, number one, I suppose, are at the head of this class?"

"Yes, sir," said Snap.

"What's your name, youngster?"

"Tom Graham, sir."

"Now, you just look at me, will you? I hear you are a very extraordinary little chap. I am very extraordinary myself! I shall never give double lessons when I am angry."

Encouraged by the gay tone of his voice, I looked up, on which he said—

"And what can you do, little one, hey?"

Being for once abashed, I shrank behind Snap, but was pulled out by his long arm, and straightway set on his knee, while Snap, at his desire, gave an account of my acquirements and his own.

After this the dogs were sent out, our new tutor began to examine our books, and speedily won our love by the clear manner in which he explained and illustrated everything.

In the course of the morning it came out that I did not know how to work.

"Not know how to work, and begin Greek?" he exclaimed. "Where's the nurse? fetch her in."

In came nurse, curtseying.

"Why, Mrs. What's-your-name," said our tutor, "I understand that your young lady cannot work!"

Nurse, taken by surprise, stammered out some excuse.

"It's a very great neglect," proceeded our new tutor, in a half bantering tone; "fetch some of your gussets and things, and let her begin directly."

"Now, sir?" said nurse.

"To be sure; set her going, and I'll superintend. I can thread a needle with any man!"

"Sir, she hasn't got a thimble."

"It is a decided thing that she must have a thimble."

"Oh yes, sir, that it is."

Mr. Smith was discomfited by this information, but not for long. Three days after, on a glorious sunny afternoon, as Snap and I were playing on the common, we saw him strolling towards us with a large parcel under his arm.

"Come here, you atom," said he to me, "I have something to show you."

So I came and crouched beside him, for he had seated himself on the grassy bank, and he very shortly unfolded to my eyes one of the sweetest sights that can be seen by a little girl. It was a doll, a large, smiling wax doll. Beside it he spread out several pieces of gay print and silk and ribbon. He had bought them, he said, at the town; and moreover, he had bought a thimble.

To ask mamma's help would have been of little use, and he scorned to ask that of nurse; but, by giving his mind to the task, and making his own independent observations, he designed, by the help of his compasses, several garments for the doll, and these, in the course of time, he and I made, thereby giving exceeding satisfaction to the servants and the family at the mill, who used furtively to watch his proceedings with great amusement.

Mr. Smith stayed with us for some time, and won our whole hearts, but he had ceased to be remarkable in my opinion, for children soon get accustomed to anything. One day, however, I was sitting on the floor of the mill, playing with a young kitten, when our nurse came in, and Mrs. Sampson began to consult her concerning the starching and getting-up of Mr. Smith's collars, for she washed for him, and it appeared that Mr. Smith was uncommonly particular about the said collars.

It was then that the miller made this sagacious observation—

"Mr. Smith," said he, "is a very remarkable young gentleman."

Was he brought up to tootering? I know better. Does he want the money he gets by it? I should say not. Very well, then, I ask you this question, What is he here for?"

"Ah," said nurse, "what is he here for?"

"For if ever there was a dull place," observed the miller, "this is it."

"Some folks," remarked Mrs. Sampson calmly, "didn't go to church yesterday morning——"

"In consequence of the cow being ill," interrupted the miller.

"Ay, the cow; it must ha' been a comfort to her that folks were asleep in the mill instead of going to church, in particular if folks never went near her all service time."

"Martha!" said the miller, "don't be aggravating. You'll never make me believe that if you heard anything yesterday morning, you could have kept it from me all this time."

"I didn't hear a word, John," said Mrs. Sampson, laughing.

"Then what did you see, Martha?"

"To hear the man talk! as if he didn't know my place was behind the pillar!"

"Then nurse saw something, and has been telling you," said the miller.

"There now, how full of curiosity some men are," said nurse.

"I saw Mr. Smith, to be sure, sitting with missis in her pew, and I saw the two children with them."

A good deal of laughing took place here, and I wondered why. The miller looked puzzled.

"He's not what one would call a white-faced gentleman at any time," observed Mrs. Sampson.

"No!" said nurse, "and yesterday when the door banged how he did colour up!"

"The squire is a deal more regular at church than you are, John!" added Mrs. Sampson.

"So indeed is the whole family," said nurse; "but that is no business of ours. Miss Fanny had on her pink muslin yesterday. She was last, and I suppose she let the door go, for, as I said, it banged."

"You don't say *that*!" cried the miller, with a radiant face.

"Don't say what?" repeated nurse, who at that moment seemed to remember my presence. "All I say is, if the door bangs and startles the congregation, it ought to have its hinges oiled."

"Hold your tongue, John," cried Mrs. Sampson, before the honest miller had said a word; and I, who was angry that Mr. Smith should be thought to have delicate nerves, exclaimed, "I don't believe Mr. Smith was a bit frightened about the door. I shall ask him if he was."

"No, miss, I wouldn't," said Mrs. Sampson earnestly; "because

he might not like it. And Sampson is going to speak to the sexton about oiling it before next Sunday."

"Yes, that I am!" said the miller.

"But I don't believe he cares about it at all," I repeated.

After this many things were said to impress on me the propriety of my not "breathing a word" of all this to Mr. Smith. But my mother coming by and calling me, I ran away from my advisers, and did not think about the door till that afternoon, when being out on the heath with Mr. Smith, I, after the fashion of children, asked him—

"Mr. Smith, you are not afraid of things, are you?"

Mr. Smith was just then sewing.

"What things?" he inquired.

"Oh, I know you are not afraid of guns, nor of leaping over gates, but Mrs. Sampson says that you were so frightened last Sunday when Miss Fanny banged the door, that you coloured up."

"Mrs. Sampson! what business is it of hers?" exclaimed Mr. Smith angrily.

"But I said I was sure you were not," I continued, looking up into his face, and lo! the healthy brown cheeks were glowing with a clear red, which suffused his face and mounted up into his temples. Mr. Smith had "coloured up" again.

"There never was such a plague of a needle," said he angrily. "I don't believe it has any eye at all. There, take it, child!"

So saying, he flung the work over to me, and starting up began to walk vehemently up and down. I knew that something troubled him and made him restless; and seeing him marching about fretting himself, I did not dare to say a word, but I told Snap what I had heard, and Snap was in an ecstasy, and turned head over heels several times—his usual way of testifying approbation.

"Oh, how jolly!" said Snap; "that's what I always wished to see people do. Why, Dolly, don't you know in all the plays and the poetry people are in love? but I have never found any real persons yet who were. Mr. Smith and Miss Fanny are in love, I'm sure. Now we'll see what they do."

Poor Mr. Smith! what an agreeable surveillance this promised him. But he remained happily unaware of the interest he was exciting; he did not know how if he sighed, which he did very often, Snap whispered to me, "That's all right, he is thinking about Miss Fanny." Nor how, if he appeared to be in low spirits, we speculated as to whether his lady love had been unkind.

I have not said anything hitherto concerning the church which we attended. It was two miles off, on the confines of the common; but until this time I had not felt any particular interest in the service, for I did not understand our old vicar's sermons, and our pew had

high sides, so that I could see nothing. When, however, our party became larger by the tutor, and Amy began to go to church, a fresh pew was awarded to my mother—one in a part of the aisle which had been newly seated, and in which we could both see and hear perfectly well.

Now in describing what we did in that pew for several Sundays one after the other, let me explain that I only chronicle—I do not excuse; and at the same time that I record, I must needs confess that I have often since wasted the hours of prayer and praise at a riper age, and with less temptation.

Our tutor sat at the door of the pew in full view of us both: his collars were starched, his gloves well-fitting, the whole man arrayed in that somewhat costly, plain, substantial, and wholly becoming manner peculiar to an English gentleman. We were early—we were always early—for we started by his watch, and he took care to allow plenty of time for the walk. As I sat with my little feet upon the hassock, I used to catch every opening of the door, and mark whose entrance he looked up to watch, and who of the waiting congregation watched him.

The clergyman and his wife would enter. Mr. Smith always mechanically followed with his eyes the former to the vestry, the latter to her pew; then the few Sunday-school children would bustle in, their teachers behind them—these he never failed to observe with interest; then the farmers and their wives, and the few labourers, would stalk with their hob-nailed shoes down the brick floors and the aisles—all these his eyes followed. But then there would be a pause; and invariably the last, as we were the first, the Squire's family would approach. That slow door would swing on its hinges, and a steady step would come on, followed by other footsteps, soft, and with the rustling of silks accompanying them, together with a certain gentle urgency of quickness, as if the owners wished to be settled in their pew before the clergyman reached his desk. The skirts of those silken dresses would brush against the door of our pew, within an inch or two of his arm, which leaned upon it; the long curls and the veils would nearly touch his shoulder. But for these fellow-worshippers Mr. Smith never raised his eyes: they remained as if glued to the floor. He rose with the rest of the congregation, he knelt, he sat, the heavy lids unlifted; and we used to watch him to see how long it would be before he would raise his head and look up; when he did, it was always a hurried, troubled glance, always to the same place—Miss Fanny's place. But be it known that Miss Fanny evinced no symptoms whatever of suffering under the same kind of trouble. She could look anywhere, and she did. Sometimes she looked at Mr. Smith; and if by a rare chance she caught his eye, she remained calm and unruffled, though he was changing from pale to red with agitated feeling.

When we left the church after service, a few moments would be spent in the porch by my mother and this family in mutual inquiries and compliments; and Mr. Smith, glad of the little delay, would linger, often lifting his hat to the ladies, and addressing one or other, but seldom Miss Fanny; if he did, it was always with deference and gravity; but she would answer with an easy smile, and sometimes accost him of her own accord. Once she asked him how he liked tutoring. He replied, "I did not choose it because I liked it."

This was not heard by our mother or Miss Fanny's. Perhaps the careless girl felt that she had made a mistake and a blundering speech, for she looked confused, and answered hurriedly, "Oh, indeed."

It rained that day; and while we waited in the porch till the shower was over, Mr. Smith spoke several times to Miss Fanny. I did not hear what he said, but I saw that when she answered, she wrapped her light summer cloak about her, and in doing so jerked out a little rose and a piece of mignonette that she had worn in her waistband. They fell on the floor, and I saw Mr. Smith look at them. They were close to his feet, and were drooping and faded.

Snap whispered to me, "Pick them up, missy."

So I did, and nobody took any notice of the movements of such a little child. When the car came to take the Squire's family away, we still stayed for the passing off of the shower, and in obedience to another mandate from Snap, I crept close to Mr. Smith, and held up the flowers for his acceptance. He looked down surprised, but he took them; and after that he sat on the stone settle of the porch and placed me on his knee; he also kissed me—a mark of his favour that he did not often bestow. Miss Fanny had kissed me at parting; so this was the second salute I received that morning, and on the same cheek too.

Sometimes Mr. Smith would meet the Squire (I prefer to write of him thus, and not to set down his name). He was then sure to be asked to dinner; and we learned that he had long been acquainted with the family, and had recently stayed, while shooting on a Scotch moor, in the same house with the second daughter. Sometimes Mr. Smith would be very much elated after one of these dinners; and once, as I well remember, he rambled out after his lunch, and quite forgot to come in again and give us an afternoon lesson, so we sat waiting for him till nearly our tea-time; and at last he came lounging in with his dogs and his gun, and seemed surprised to see us, exclaiming with a laugh, "I declare I quite forgot that I was playing at schoolmaster."

But notwithstanding this occasional forgetfulness, he showed a real genius for instructing children; and, true to his initiatory warning, he never set any double lessons by way of punishment, but, on the contrary, cut short his instructions altogether when he was

displeased, and made Snap write copies—an occupation which he detested.

As for me, I had many privileges: my youth, my very small dimensions, my lisping tongue, caused him to consider me in the light of a plaything; and he made exactly the same unfair distinction between us that Mr. Mompesson had done, frequently taking me out with him, and carrying me when I was tired, while Snap was left to amuse himself at home. This he did not find difficult, for my mother's books, in four boxes and three large "crates," had been put into a thatched shed which leant against the cottage on the left; and there through the summer and autumn they remained, taking no damage; and Snap and I used to spend many a happy hour in turning them over, picking up queer pieces of information, reading strange tales and marvellous histories. Sir Walter Scott's romances, Captain Scoresby's works, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which was a very favourite work; the "Faery Queen," numerous bound volumes of the *Edinburgh Review*, Cary's "Dante," the "Religio Medici," and "Robinson Crusoe," were our chief companions at first, but Snap soon left these to me, and got Bacon's "Essays," and a whole stratum of books on geology, which filled his head with all sorts of theories that served him to frighten me with, as ghosts had now grown stale.

The hypothesis of the "central fire" caused me great alarm, especially as Snap declared that it might be expected to break out at any time; as, indeed, it frequently did from the craters of burning mountains, overflowing the great caldron at the top and slipping glibly down, making the green crops and the grass hiss and fizz. An alarming picture this, especially when it was added that a stream of lava, if of any considerable depth, took from three to eleven years to cool.

Snap never asserted that the lava was likely to break out in our immediate neighbourhood; on the contrary, he said it was improbable that it would, but still it *might*, and then what would become of us! He took great delight in imagining what we should do if it should break out from the top of a high black hill about three miles from us; and every device I suggested as likely to aid us in effecting our escape made him the more positive in asserting that nothing was so unlikely as our being able to get away.

Once when I was deep in thought considering what I could do if the volcanic fire should break out that day or the next, Mr. Smith came by with his dogs and his gun. Snap went on reading, but I asked if I might come with him. He said I might, and told me that he was going to dig out some young rabbits from their burrows, and that I should have them to tame and feed in a hutch that he would make for them.

This delightful genius could not, only work with his needle, but had

made for us a first-rate wheelbarrow; rigged for us two schooners and a brig; dug for my mother a good-sized duck pond, into which he turned the waters of a tiny spring; and built, drained, and thatched a fine model pigsty with his own manly hands.

Sometimes when my mother saw him at his carpenter's work, she would say, "Really, Mr. Smith, it astonishes me to find you toiling in this way."

"It's the finest thing in the world—nothing like work," he would reply. "'Blessed be the man that invented sleep,' quoth the Irishman; but I say, 'Happy rest the man that invented sawing.' Next to deer-stalking, sawing is the most delightful, back-breaking, arm-aching work going."

But to return. Mr. Smith and I set off on our ramble. The green common was basking in the mild yellow sunshine of a fine autumnal day; every little elevation was covered with heather, gorse, and fox-glove flowers; the young larks hidden under the ferns were chirping softly, the sky was serene, and all the wide-open world seemed drinking the sunshine.

We wandered on, but found no burrows that Mr. Smith thought would answer our purpose. He was very silent, and I, being happy enough on the uncultivated hills, did not care for that, but went on singing by his side, till a large brown dog ran up a slope towards us, wading and leaping through the bracken, and jumping up against Mr. Smith to be caressed. Some of the Squire's family must be out on the heath, we thought, for this dog belonged to them. We were not left long in doubt, for turning the edge of the hill, we began to go down, and there a few feet below us we saw Miss Fanny sitting. Her bonnet was off, her long flaxen hair was out of curl, and she was smoothing it out and twisting it over combs on either side of her face.

She looked up when we appeared, and Mr. Smith paused a minute; then with a swift step he came down to her, and sat on the bank at her side. Girls wore large bonnets then, and Miss Fanny, when I came running towards her, was just putting on hers. The first greetings were over: Miss Fanny began to pat the dog's head, Mr. Smith to pat his back. Then they talked, but said nothing of interest; and I, growing rather tired of the delay, asked if I might take a run with the dog, and come back to them. The permission being readily given by Mr. Smith, I forthwith ran away, and the dog and I chased one another among the heather and bracken till we were tired; then I found some mushrooms, and filled my bonnet with them by way of a basket. After that some blackberries presented themselves, and I feasted on these before I returned.

The sunshine was very soft and sweet, and the air was still, and we were on an elevated place, so that I could see far and wide over the peaceful solitude.

I came softly back, carrying my bonnet by the strings, and wading breast-high through the bracken, when on a sudden turn I found myself close behind Mr. Smith and Miss Fanny. They had changed their places, and Miss Fanny was sobbing. "What can I do, George?" were the words that I heard. "I really have tried, I have indeed. I—I cannot care for you—oh!" Here a burst of tears.

"Won't you try once more, Fanny?" answered a manly voice, absolutely broken by sobs. "I wouldn't mind stopping here seven years if you could but love me."

Now when I heard this I was so ashamed to think that I should be there to hear their conversation unawares that I have no doubt my face was crimson up to the roots of my hair; but it was not easy to withdraw both silently and swiftly; and, though I did my best, I not only heard her reply that trying was useless, but allude to a promise she had made that she would try, and declare that she had kept it.

"Well, then," was his instant answer, "will you give me one kiss? And I will go, Fanny, and promise never to urge you any more."

I had got away by this time, and I buried myself among the bracken, and sat blushing for five or six minutes; then I got up, ran, whooping to the dog, over the brow of the hill, and came up to them on the other side. There they sat side by side and hand in hand. They were quite calm now; but evidently both had been weeping sorely, and assuredly, from their absolute quietude, the farewell kiss of pity had been frankly given.

Quite out of breath with agitation and with running, I displayed my mushrooms. They both rose at once, as if my return was to terminate their last interview. Miss Fanny went over the hill, and we went down it, returning homewards in absolute silence for more than a mile.

Poor Mr. Smith! my heart bled for him. It seemed so hard that Miss Fanny could not like him, when he was undeniably so charming and so clever, besides being, with the exception of Mr. Mompesson, the handsomest man of his age.

"Would you like some mushrooms for your supper, Mr. Smith?" I ventured to ask in a sympathising tone, as I carried home my bonnet by the strings; but he was too deep in painful thought to observe that I had spoken, and very shortly, in spite of all my efforts, the sight of his silent misery completely overpowered my childish self-control, and I threw the bonnet on the grass, and burst into a passion of tears, crying as if my heart would break.

"What's the matter with the child?" he exclaimed rather roughly; for I have no doubt my tears irritated him in the then burdened state of his spirits.

I did not dare to tell him what was the matter; indeed, what business had I to know the circumstance that distressed me?

"Are you tired?" he asked, more gently.

"No," I whispered.

"Are you hungry? Here—"

He took a biscuit from his pocket, and I pretended to be glad of it, got up, wiped away my tears, and walked humbly by his side till we reached home, and entered my mother's parlour. It was all lighted up with the afternoon sunshine in which the hills and the heather were basking. The tea-things were on the table, and the tea was ready.

"Why, Dolly," said my mother, "you have been crying,—how red your eyes look. I hope you have not been naughty?"

"No," said Mr. Smith, wearily throwing himself into his chair; "the child has been good enough."

"What a lovely afternoon it has been," observed my mother.

"Has it?" he replied, looking out of the window. "Ah. Ay, so it has."

With what a weight of pity does patience in those who are suffering burden the minds of the lookers-on. There sat Mr. Smith calmly and most quietly; he was not yielding to unmanly sullenness, and he was resolutely obliging himself to eat and to drink. Seeing this, I could do neither, for my tears chased one another into my cup, and the bread and butter choked me when I tried to swallow.

In reply to mamma's questions I said that my head ached, and I had a ball in my throat. She said I could lie down on the sofa; and perhaps thinking she might suppose some past ill-behaviour or carelessness caused this crying fit, Mr. Smith said, with a kindness that made me cry still more, "Dolly did her lessons very well to-day; she always does—in fact, I never have a fault to find with her." I dare say mamma thought that this was a little unfair to Snap, who took far more pains with his lessons than I did, and now sat by without receiving any share of commendation.

"I am afraid you spoil my little girl," she said, with a smile, "for I generally observe that whatever she does is right."

"Ah well," said Mr. Smith, with a sigh, "if I have done harm in that way hitherto, I shall do no more. That's all over now."

My mother, who had risen, turned with surprise on hearing this; and he added, as if careless of our presence, "You always said, you know, Mrs. Graham, that you should not wish me to stay a day longer than I liked."

"No, certainly not," my mother replied; "*under the circumstances* I should wish you to feel perfectly free."

"Well, then," he replied, "I should like to go to-morrow——"

"To go home?" she asked.

"Yes, to be sure," he replied; "I owe it to *them*, to go home. But the worst of it is—the worst of it is, they will all be delighted, I know."

CHAPTER V.

"The owl, for all his feathers, was acold."

KEATS.

WHEN Snap heard that Mr. Smith meant to leave us, he melted also, and added a chorus of sobs to my tears, while poor Mr. Smith, who perhaps longed for a little feminine sympathy, and was really fond of my mother, begged her to come out and walk on the grass with him.

They went out, and after some time I stole into my little room, and from its window saw them moving slowly along over the short grass on the hillock behind the mill. The whole sky was flooded with orange, though the sun was below the horizon; the mild evening star shone, and a crescent moon was hanging just over the phantom-like sails, which were going softly round in the early dusk. Wind was rising, and I saw the miller's wife shut her door and begin to blow her fire, for the evening was chill. It gave me a strange sense of restlessness and yearning sympathy to see them pacing so long, where they could only see the movement of the sails, the darkening landscape, and driving clouds.

I sobbed myself to sleep that night; but, oh how indignant Snap and I were when we found the next morning that Mr. Smith had gone away without taking leave of us!

Here I must make a highly unphilosophical reflection, which, however, comes from experience—namely, that what happens to a person once is likely to happen again. It has repeatedly happened to me that people have been withdrawn from me without being able or finding convenient occasion for saying any last words. Now those last words very often set many things right. I have not been able to say, "Though we have often quarrelled, there is no friend whom I care for more." Nor has it been said to me, "I may not have shown it much, but I have, notwithstanding, a very sincere affection for you."

So Mr. Smith went away, and during the following winter my mother was our teacher in the morning, and we ran about over the common during the short winter afternoons.

Those little houses were not comfortable in the winter; we slept in one and breakfasted in the other, so that in all weather we were obliged to be often running in and out. The rain and the melted snow also soaked in at the doors rather freely, and the casements, besides being of a restless, noisy disposition, had a trick of bursting open in high winds.

Yet we were often indescribably happy in those cottages. Their loneliness gave us the sense of having nobody to interfere with our becoming more and more ourselves. The common was so wide that

we had plenty of room to spread and grow in. At Christmas there was a deep fall of snow, and it was not safe to go to church. Our nurse could no longer bear the dullness of her lot and went away, so we were left with only one servant, and we spent some days in moving our mother's books from the place in which they had been kept to a dry place in the mill. As we always chose to carry more at a time than we could properly manage, a good many were dropped about and lost for a few days, from being covered over; but no harm came to them—it was so cold that the snow was perfectly dry.

Sometimes little Amy was carried to the mill to play with Sampson's children, and sometimes Mrs. Sampson came and sat with us. She did not like what she called "the awful way the moon had," and the drifts were so deep that she never let her children stir a step beyond the path between us and the mill.

How it snowed, and how keen the wind was! I remember to this day the disgust with which we heard Sampson advising my mother by no means to let us go out, lest we should be lost.

"Let them dig and sweep out a path for themselves, ma'am," said he; "but if I were you, I would not let them stir a step beyond it."

When it had gone on snowing for eleven days, there was a consultation between the miller and his wife as to whether or not he should go in his cart to market the next day; and I believe he would gladly have stayed at home, but that there was no butcher's meat in either his house or ours, and we were falling short of candles.

There was a ridge about half a mile long, which rose a hundred yards beyond the mill. It was level, and the wind had been so high that the top of it was nearly bared of snow, and the drifts were laid up in the hollow that cut us off from it.

Sampson and a man who came to help him dug a lane in the easiest part of the rise, and got the horse and cart up it. Once on the rise, Sampson could easily get on, for by taking an extremely circuitous path he could keep on high ground till he reached the turnpike road.

We had finished our supper, as I remember, that night, and had been allowed to sit up till ten o'clock, because our little bedrooms were so cold; when just as the candle burnt down into the socket, mamma told us to read a chapter in the Bible to her before we went to bed.

"And, I suppose, we must begin to burn the last candle," she observed.

So Snap was sent to ask for it (for I need not say we had no bells), and he presently came back with rather a blank face.

"We're not to have it," he exclaimed; "Mrs. Sampson has come for it."

Sarah, our maid, followed him, trembling.

"Sampson is not come home, ma'am," she cried; "and, oh, if you

please, will you come to Mrs. Sampson, for she thinks he is lost in the snow."

Mrs. Sampson was close behind her, standing with a dull, white face; her hands were hanging at her side, and she said slowly, and with a sort of passionless indifference—

"Yes, that's just what I do think. He's lost in the snow, and by this time he's froze."

My mother had started up, and taken hold of her.

"Where have you been?" she exclaimed. "Oh, Sarah, the poor thing is dreadfully cold."

"I've been sitting up a-top of the mill," she replied. "I want your other candle to show a light to him. But he won't come; he's froze."

Sampson's great white cat, that lived in the mill, had accompanied her, and was mewling uneasily, and rubbing herself against my mother's gown.

"She knows as well as I do, poor beast," said Mrs. Sampson; and certainly the dumb creature showed every sign of distress. "But I must go back and snuff the candle," she continued; "I left it burning, and there is but an inch of it left."

"Do," said my mother, "come to the mill, and I will come with you. It is late certainly for him to be away, but you must not be downhearted."

"Oh, no," she replied, looking drearily about her, "I am not downhearted. Why should I be?"

Sarah and my mother glanced at one another, but neither could suggest the doing of anything more. They got Mrs. Sampson to drink some wine made hot in a little saucepan, then a log was put on the fire, and as it could not be expected of us that we should go to bed, we had leave to sit by it, and they left us—my mother to sit with the poor wife, and Sarah to make herself useful in case Sampson appeared. We sat by that fire a long time. Our mother did not appear, so at last we crept up-stairs to my little bedroom, and looked out. There was the light burning in the upper window of the mill; there was the wide expanse of snow, with the great white moon hanging over it; and beyond, on the ridge, there were the owls flitting about mousing and hooting. I never liked the owl's call—it is but two notes of music tied together with a moan.

We listened. No sound of wheels, no sign of our mother's return. Our cuckoo-clock struck eleven, and with one accord we put on our out-of-door clothing, and resolved to run across to the mill, and beg her to let us stay with her there.

Running briskly along the path, we got to the mill-door and opened it, letting in a broad ray of moonlight, which showed us the mice running about, but we heard no voices above. We thought our mother must be gone to the cottage.

Of course whatever my brother did, I did. He shut the door, and said he should get up by Sampson's path on to the ridge. I followed, and we both fell into a drift almost directly, and were up to our necks without much chance of getting out again. There was snow in our nostrils, and our sleeves and hats had snow in them; but I cannot say I was afraid, because we were so close to the mill. Still, I did think it a pity Snap would insist on floundering up the path, instead of trying to get back again; but I followed, and in less time than could have been hoped we came to a place where the drift had been carefully shovelled away and beaten down, and got on the ridge, which was nearly bared by the wind. It was so thinly covered with snow that the tops of the grass peered through. It was also printed with the feet of rabbits, not a few of whom were dancing about on it seeking a scanty meal, while an owl here and there might be seen skimming about, looking after the young ones.

I cannot describe the excitement that took possession of our minds at that moment. There we were out in the snow in the middle of the night, on the ridge that we had so long desired to reach. Nobody knew of our absence. The tall white mill, with its lanky skeleton sails, looked clear and large in the intense moonlight; the clean white ridge was before us; the heavens, swept bare of clouds, and scattered with stars, appeared wonderfully deep and remote; the rabbits darted by close to our feet; the hooting owls almost brushed our clothes. We stood a moment panting with joy at finding ourselves in such a novel situation, and then Snap tossed back his head like a young colt that has regained his liberty, and set off running along the ridge at his utmost speed.

Of course I followed, and we both utterly forgot poor Sampson in the bliss of that midnight enterprise; the wild flight of those clear shadows of ourselves that sped on before; the strange silence, broken by noises yet more strange, such as the snoring of an owl as she stood on the snow picking the bones of some hairy little victim, or the forlorn squeal of a rabbit when it felt the fanning wings of its fate sailing over it in ghostlike stillness, and shutting out the light of the moon. On we ran, wild with excitement and delight. We could not be seen from the cottage, nor from the window in the mill, and we did not stop till we came to the end of the ridge, which was about half a mile long, and descended so abruptly that two or three steps too far brought Snap up to his eyes in the drift again.

And now came the return. That was more thoughtful and slow. What if we should be discovered? We were tired, too, and were in twenty minds whether to hasten or linger. To linger was to prolong the time before discovery should overtake us; but if we hastened, we might not be found out at all.

Sometimes running, sometimes loitering, we had perhaps traversed half the ridge; were very cross, rather cold, and in exceedingly low

spirits, when suddenly Snap exclaimed, with a vehement shout of joy, "Hurrah! there's the horse; there's the cart;" and before I could see them his voice dropped, and he said, "I don't see Sampson."

I looked, and at the side of the ridge a very little way down the shallow slope I saw the horse and cart and something in the cart. The horse was standing stock still. He had evidently been guided up to the foot of the ridge, but perhaps it had proved too steep for him, and he either would not or could not climb it.

We ran hastily on, well aware that Sampson must have lost his way, or he would not have gone into that hollow at all; and when we drew near we saw that he was lying in the bottom of the cart, and appeared to be dozing.

Snap was again in an ecstasy. At the harvest-home, Sampson, usually the most sober of men, had been reported to have come home "a little fresh." Snap thought this was the case again, and shouted to me to come down the slope and get into the cart, for he meant to drive it to the mill himself. His joy and pride were great, and mine, I suppose, must have helped me to flounder through the snow. My hat was full of it when he helped me to climb into the clumsy thing, and I sobbed for want of breath, but as he said it was all right, I was ashamed to cry; and he picked up the whip and began to use all his efforts to induce the horse to back. The poor beast was very stiff and weary; but blows, shouts, and vigorous pulls at the bridle roused him at last, and Snap mounted, and began his triumphant progress.

But Snap, child as he was, soon perceived that though he could make the horse go, he could not make him take the direction he had intended. The creature woke up more and more, and tried the ridge in two or three different places, backing when he found he could not drag the cart up, and making for an easier slope. At last, with incredible efforts, and kickings and stumblings most lamentable, he got up. All this time poor Sampson slumbered, while we in our ignorance did not attempt to wake him, lest he should take the reins from us; all we did for him was to clear the snow from his face, and shake it from his garments, when it flew into the cart, while the horse struggled in the deep drift.

And now we were on the top of the ridge, and that accomplished the horse stood stock still again. I remember that this time it was very hard to make him move, but by dint of shouts, stamping, and use of the whip, we got him in the end to set forth on a tolerably quick trot, and we had nearly reached the path we had ascended, when out of the mill issued Mrs. Sampson, my mother, and Sarah, running as if for their lives. The happy sound of the wheels had reached them, and at the same time the exceeding noise and disturbance in the cart, together with grievous jolting and rattling, roused poor Samp-

son a little, and just as we stopped and Mrs. Sampson sprang into the cart, he lifted his head from his breast.

"Oh, my blessed, blessed husband!" exclaimed the poor woman, bursting into tears, and taking his head on her capacious bosom; "are you froze, John? How do you feel?"

Sampson looked about him, and raised himself. She shook him, repenting, "How do you feel, John?" Whereupon he exerted himself sufficiently to answer very slowly, "I feel as if all my bones were broke."

Never was the wisest speech received with greater applause. Mrs. Sampson and Sarah each took a foot, and began to rub unmercifully, but the process of jolting and bruising that he had just gone through was probably the best part of the discipline that brought him to his senses, for he was soon able to get down and slowly express his surprise at finding it so late. He must have been dozing there some time when we had rushed along the ridge, and in our joy and hurry, we had passed without observing him.

No one took any notice of us. The moon was just setting, and I remember seeing mother standing with a pitched faggot held high to light us into the cottage by the mill. I remember also, that when first they wished Sampson to try and walk down to his door, he looked forlornly at us, and said slowly, with a deep sigh, "Women and children—women and children," but he was obliged to yield himself to our help, and we all four pushed, pulled, and supported him till he got into his house, and then he said to my mother, "Well, ma'am, I could humbly wish to know *whatever* all this means."

That one word "humbly" expressed all his manly displeasure and pride at finding himself under personal thralldom to the "women and children."

Soon after this I curled myself up in a corner of the warm kitchen, and fell asleep, when no doubt I was carried home to bed, for when I woke there, I was none the worse.

The next morning Snap was alternately penitent and exultant, and while we were waiting till my mother came down to breakfast, he made one of those speeches which, because I could not make out its meaning, I could not forget.

"I'll tell you what," said this puny philosopher, "I used always to hate the morals—but it's no good! They're in everything. It's my belief they're a part of the world. Yes, they're ingrain."

I had generally disliked the morals too; what child takes kindly to "hence we may learn?" but I by no means troubled myself as to Snap's general meaning; and my mother shortly coming down, he gave her a fair and faithful account of our midnight adventure, adding, "It is a wonder how missy ever scrambled out of that drift; it was over her head! I thought for a minute she was lost when she rolled plump into it, and the snow fell together and

covered her—and so,” he added, in a tone of deep reflection—
“and so, mother, I’ve made up my mind to give it up.”

“Yes,” she answered, “you had better.”

“For,” he continued, “of course we had no business to go out at night and get into danger, and it would be fair if you were to say that was evil.”

“I certainly do say so,” she replied, “though I have no intention of punishing you. I cannot even pretend that I am displeased! I am very thankful.”

“Yes,” said Snap, “for we saved Sampson’s life.”

“So now,” replied my mother, “I hope I shall hear no more of this morbid fancy of yours. Here you have an easy example of how good can come out of evil, so don’t lie awake again to puzzle about it. The case of Joseph is not a solitary one. It may be said a thousand times every day on earth, as it is in heaven, ‘As for you, your thoughts were for evil, but God meant it unto good’—God looked on this evil, you see, and caused it to bring forth good.”

“Does Snap lie awake when it’s dark?” I exclaimed. “I have often tried, but I never could.”

Thereupon my mother said if I would promise never to try again she would give me a bright new shilling; so I did promise, and got the shilling.

Amy lost it the very next day down a crack; but a shilling was of no particular use in those days, excepting to play with, so we did not very much care; a penny would spin just as well, and was a great deal larger.

(To be continued.)